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WITHDRAWN

ONE HUNDRED

SHORT SERMONS

FOR THE PEOPLE

ON THE APOSTLES' CREED.

By Rev. L. P. GRAVEL.

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VOLUME I.—THIRD THOUSAND.

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PREFACE.

IN order to carry out the decree of the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, and to comply with the ardent wish of the Most Reverend Archbishop of New York, I have preached these short sermons at the Low Masses on Sundays.

I acquiesced with the suggestion made by some friends to publish them in book form to present matter for spiritual reading to the faithful.

It is not a work for theologians nor scholars, but it is intended for the class of people who, in all our large cities, attend only a Low Mass on Sundays and expect to get some word of teaching and exhortation from their priests.

Therefore, I make no pretence to flowers of style and brilliant passages. I have endeavored to be plain and simple. Should the reader find a little spiritual help in perusing and meditating on these short sermons, I shall consider my reward as exceedingly great.

THE AUTHOR.

Nihil Obstat:

ALEXANDER MERCIER, O. P.,
Censor Deputatus.

October 11th, 1901.

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PRELIMINARIES.

FAITH.

SERMON I.

THE CHRISTIAN BELONGS TO CHRIST.

But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. (I. Peter ii.—9.)

Dear Brethren : The members of a society belong to that society. The citizens of the United States belong to the United States, and owe to its government allegiance and respect. You, dear brethren, you are a purchased people, a holy nation, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. You as Christians belong to Christ. The Christian by virtue of his sacred calling is the man of Jesus Christ; (I. Cor. iii.—23.) because he has given himself to Him in Baptism by a public consecration.

I say "a public consecration," for the Church, which is destined to rule the entire world in the diffusion of the Christian Faith, reveals herself in the broad light of day. She is not like those secret societies which enroll their members in the darkness of Masonic secrecy. Truth requires light. A

man does not hide himself to teach what is right. Those who conspire against truth and justice seek the darkness of secrecy to further their destructive plans. Men hate the light, because their deeds are darkness. Justly, therefore, has Leo XIII. condemned the secret societies of the Freemasons, the Odd-Fellows and the Knights of Pythias.

The admission of the child into the membership of the Church is free and public. No force or undue persuasion is exercised in carrying out this most momentous of all steps. The minister of God asks the child : " Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ? Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ ; in the Church of God ? " And the godfather and the godmother who stand for the child answer : " Yes, I do believe." The priest continues : " Dost thou renounce Satan and all his works and pomps ? " Again the child, in the person of his sponsors, says : " Yes, I do renounce." To show the greater liberty entailed by this consecration, the Church through the minister adds : " Wilt thou be baptized ? " " Yes, I will," is the answer. " Then, child, since you wish to be baptized, to be a Christian, I, as the priest of God—" I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Could any liberty be more complete or extended in its entirety ?

But you may say: "I was too young to understand the nature of this consecration; my parents had me baptized, my godfather and my godmother answered for me." I can reply in asserting that these solemn promises have been renewed by you on the day of your first Communion and again ratified on your Confirmation day; but I prefer to answer your objection in a more specific manner. A friend of yours falls sick on the street; a burning fever renders him insensible—he is dying. A doctor is hastily summoned, and after exercising his professional skill to the utmost the sick man is brought to a state of consciousness. If, after this wonderful cure, your friend refuses to pay the doctor's fee, saying: "I do not owe you anything; I did not summon you; why did you come to assist me?" What would be your opinion of such a person? You would justly condemn him for his foolishness or ingratitude. Dear brethren, when we come into this world we are stricken by the terrible disease of original sin. If we happen to die while in that deplorable state, heaven's joys are denied us forever. Alas! the life of a child is so frail, verily, it hangs upon a slender thread. How many children die before the age of reason? How many leave this world shortly after their birth? Parents are only manifesting their love for their offspring when, in order to assure their eternal salvation, they have the regenerating waters of

Baptism poured upon them at the very earliest opportunity.

What are the engagements taken in Baptism compared to the inestimable advantages given by it? What are the promises made in your name compared to the daily danger to which you are exposed? Common sense as well as the dictates of conscience, tells me that we belong to Christ by the right of creation as well as by the spiritual kingship conferred by the Sacrament of regeneration. How then can we refuse Him our bodies and our souls?

The most beautiful privilege which man can enjoy is liberty Independence is the chiefest of blessings. God has bestowed this priceless treasure upon us, but on the condition that we submit to her laws. Still, in spite of our innate love for liberty, do we not like, so to speak, to fetter ourselves in working for a man of high social standing. Even the warmest partisans of equality deem it an honor to be attached to some office carrying with it either an ambassadorial or presidential dignity. Our liberty seems to be enhanced by such a position. Now, what are all the honors and privileges which can be offered us by any earthly potentate compared to the supereminent dignity of belonging to the service of Christ, the Son of the living God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who has on the day of our Baptism imprinted His seal upon our foreheads,

The saints esteemed highly this sacred dignity of serving Christ. St. Agatha said to Quintillian, governor of Sicily, who sought her in marriage for his son: "Remember that it is nobler and more honorable to serve the Lord, even in the most venial occupation, than to be the consort of an earthly prince." St. Louis, king of France, baptized at Poissy, used to say that it was in the lowly chapel of that village that he had received the greatest honor; that is, his becoming a Christian, a disciple of Christ; and he, St. Louis, king of France, wished to be known as Louis of Poissy, to recall to him the superb dignity which he had received from Christ. St. Sebastian, captain of the first cohort of the Roman Empire, chose death in preference to becoming the emperor's favorite by denying Christ. Replying to the flattering propositions of Maximillian, he boldly declared: "I prefer the honor of serving Jesus Christ to all the dignities and emoluments of the empire." Millions of martyrs have renounced honors, riches and dignities to belong to Christ alone. "We are Christians," said they; and they suffered and died cheerfully rather than swerve one iota from the faith of their Divine Lord and Master.

Dear brethren, you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people. Do not forget that the higher we stand the lower we fall, especially when we fall through our own malice.

It is recorded in history that a king's son being imprisoned, was delivered up to a ruffian, who in addition to the crime of perverting the child's soul, also heaped upon him many indignities. In a state of intoxication, the unfortunate child had the misfortune to insult the memory of his father and to calumniate his mother. Poor child, he had become the slave of a slave ; his sufferings were indeed trying ; but, on the other hand, how deep was his perversity and degradation. Dear brethren, you are of a royal race, destined princes of the kingly treasures of heaven, but you are surrounded by the agents of hell who seek your destruction with every means in their power. In the delirium of your passions you insult Christ, your loving Father, and caluminate the Church, your tender mother. Miserable souls, ruined by sin, who can recognize on them the seal of Christ ! Remember that you belong to Christ by Baptism, that you must follow His teachings, that it is an honor for you to belong to Him, the Master of life, the Ruler of the world, the only One that can give you the happiness prepared since the foundation of the world.

Yes, be faithful, and you shall receive the crown of life. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Gal. vi.—14.)

Dear Brethren : The nations of the world have their flags by which they can be recognized on land and sea. The starry banner is the emblem of the American nation. In like manner, we Christians have a banner, a standard, a sign, by which we recognize one another and by which we show to the world that we are Christians enrolled in the divine service of Jesus Christ. This sign is our honor, our distinction, our glory. The soldier amid the din and crash of battle expires with a smile parting his lips in honor of the flag of his country. We Christians ought to fight, nay, even to die in defence of our standard, "The sign of the Cross."

The word "sign" means sometimes an image, a representation, a remembrance. The crucifix, that is, the Cross with the image of the Crucified Saviour, is the sign of the Cross, since it is the representation of the Passion of our Lord. It is also the sign of the Cross which casts a hallowed

shadow over our cemeteries, shining as the symbol of a glorious resurrection upon the graves of our beloved departed ones ; it is the same divine sign which we behold so conspicuously in our churches, reminding us of the sacred passion of our Divine Master and of the three principal mysteries of our holy faith : the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. But the sign of the Cross, in the strict sense of the word, is a religious ceremony by which we make on ourselves or on certain objects, the figure, the form of the Cross.

This pious and holy devotion was very dear to the primitive Christians. We read in Church History that the Christian soldiers of Julian the Apostate blessed themselves before taking their meals, and used the same sign to testify their refusal to offer sacrifice to the false deities of the emperor. The glorious confessors and martyrs of the Faith used this symbol of faith in a Crucified God. Tertullian, the earliest of the Latin Fathers, writes : " We make the sign of the Cross every time we start for some place, when we come out or when we come into our houses, before we dress, eat or retire for the night. We begin every undertaking by the sign of the Cross. We hold this pious habit from those who taught us ; we practice it faithfully, and we do not shrink from it."

Long before Tertullian, the great Apostle St. Paul made the Cross his only glory. For him the

Cross is the standard of the Christian, and he highly exalts it. But, O Apostle, the Cross on which your Master was nailed was a stumbling-block for the Jews and a folly to the Gentiles. (I. Cor. i.—23.) Should you not rather glory in that sublime eloquence which drew upon you the admiration of the awe-stricken Athenians; in that zeal by which you have founded so many churches and converted so many thousands of unbelievers? "No! no!" he replies, "my glory is not in them." Then you glory in that ineffable grace which carried you into the third heaven and which revealed to you mysteries too sublime to publish here below. Again he replies: "No! no! I do not glory in these heavenly favors." Oh, I see, you glory in the fatigues and hardships borne for the faith, in the persecutions endured to spread it, in the cruel scourging and torments which greeted your divine preaching! "No! no!" he still replies, "my title to glory does not lie in these." Then where is thy glory? Hear the answer: "God forbids that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. vi.—14.)

In these days of Christian faith the Cross was so highly venerated that St. Peter, the renowned prince of the Apostles, did not hold himself worthy to die as his Divine Master on this sacred sign of our Redemption, and asked to be crucified with his head downward. St. Andrew seeing the

Cross on which he was about to die, exclaimed in a holy ecstasy of joy : " O dear Cross, thee have I longed for ! O Cross on which my Divine Saviour died, may I be nailed to thy arms ! " This proves sufficiently that the Apostles and the first Christians cherished a deep veneration for the sign of our salvation.

Now, brethren, let me point out to you the salutary effects of the sign of the Cross.

First, it gives to the Sacraments their perfection; for we never administer a Sacrament of the Church without making the sign of the Cross. The priest in baptizing pours the water upon the person to be baptized, in the form of the Cross, saying at the same time : " I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The bishop in Confirmation makes the sign of the Cross with Holy Chrism on the foreheads of the persons to be confirmed. The priest in the Consecration of the bread and wine, in the administering of the Sacrament of Penance, or uniting persons in the holy bonds of Matrimony, always makes use of the sign of the Cross. Justly, then, does St. Cyprian say : " We glory in the Cross of our Saviour ; from it is derived the virtue of the Sacraments ; without this sacred sign, nothing is holy or consecrated. All holiness comes from the Cross and is brought forth by it."

Secondly, the sign of the Cross is a supreme act of

faith. We have read of martyrs whose tongues were plucked out, whose faces were disfigured by the tyrant, still proclaiming their faith in the Crucified One, by the sign of the Cross. And you lonely missionaries traversing the primeval forests of the New World, beholding their virgin beauties, who has told you that those sons of the forests whom you have met were one with you in the profession of the same faith, since you could not yet understand their language? Ah! a mystical interpreter was given you, for the sign of the Cross made by them spoke more eloquently than human tongue, and told you that a black robe had passed there before you and bowed the stubborn necks of the aboriginal tribes to a faith of such intense fervor and a love of such ardent fire that would put to blush the weak and effeminate Christian of our day. No wonder the tear of joy started to your eye and rolled down your cheek when, far from home and civilization, you found the empire of Jesus Christ acknowledged, far away from the haunt of civilizing power, and this by a single sign of the Cross. Catholics of the North, of the South, West and East, all ye nations whose languages I do not understand, on seeing you make the sign of the Cross I understand you. What human pen can depict the grandeur of that sign! Faith in one God and three persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Son of God made man and dying

for us. Though you may be strangers to me, I understand you—we are brethren in Christ. Your hearts and mine beat in unison at the sight of the Cross, because we understand it and bow before it. I understand you, strangers, and I swear before that Christ we all adore, never to blush at that bond which unites our hearts, souls and minds ; never to blush at the standard of the Cross, as a brave soldier will never blush at the standard of his country.

Lastly, the sign of the Cross has a marvellous power to conquer and overcome the temptations of the devil. Armed with this sacred sign, St. Anthony in the desert fought against the powers of Hell. "My children, he used to say to his disciples, take the armor of the Cross, and the arrows of Satan shall fall harmlessly around you."

Brethren, we are Christians—we belong to Christ—and the sign of the Christian is that of the Cross. The Cross is our banner, our standard, our safeguard and our strength. Keep in your homes, Christian families, an image of Christ crucified. It shall give you consolation in all your trials and sorrows ; it shall cast a halo of peace around you in your dying moments, teaching you resignation and submission to the will of your Heavenly Father. Often make the sign of the Cross in the morning and at night, before and after meals, before and after work. In placing your hand

upon your forehead, consecrate to God the Father your intelligence; and then on your heart, offering your love to the Son Who has loved you so much ; and upon your shoulders, promising to submit to the Holy Ghost your will and your strength.

Brethren, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, I beseech you to love the Cross ; it will guide you through your painful journey in life, it will encourage and fortify you in the midst of the battle which Satan will wage against you for the salvation of your souls ; and after being here below the distinctive mark of the true Church of God, it will be also the distinctive mark of the elect on the Judgment Day, when everyone will be rewarded according to his work. Amen.

SERMON III.

FAITH.

Without Faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. xi.—6.)

My dear Brethren : Political belief rests mainly upon the principles formulated by a political party of recognized power and authority ; the belief of the Christian rests upon the faith which Christians have in the dogmas revealed by God Himself. The political belief of a party may be wrong, because it comes from a fallible source. The belief of a Christian can never be erroneous, because it has for its foundation God Himself, the immutable Authority.

Brethren, I wish to speak to you this morning on Faith—the faith of Christ, the head of the Christians, to Whom you belong and Whom you acknowledge as your Lord and Saviour.

I. *Now, what do we understand by Faith ? How can I give you an idea of it ?*

At the beginning of creation all was chaos. Suddenly a Divine Voice is heard to say : "Let there be light, (Gen. i.—3) and there was light."

Immediately it shone, and later it illuminated the works of creation : the plants and flowers which bloomed in noon-day splendor, the animals which covered the lands, and the multitudes of birds whose gay songs ascended in joyful praise to their magnificent Creator.

Consider for a moment, dear brethren, what a spectacle all these diverse forms of creative life would present if not viewed in the light of day. Unknown would they be, and thus destined to remain forever. Even man, if he were created in this dark state, would not have reason to bless and thank his Creator. But the almighty "fiat" went forth, and the splendors of nature were revealed bathed in the rays of the glowing orb of light, and the astonished gaze of the first man was directed to view their magnificence and beauty. Light unveils then the things of this world and teaches us to know them.

Faith is the light of the soul—it unveils truths to our intelligences and reveals to us our immortal destiny. Ask an atheist or an infidel why he is in this world, what are his duties, and where will he go after death ? If he is sincere, he will say : " I do not know ; there are so many opinions about that, I dare not say anything concerning it." Man ! you doubt and still you do not inquire. You risk the salvation of your soul. Why do you allow your intellect to remain apathetic when this all-

important question remains to be answered ? Seek its solution, and you will find why the immortal soul of man is never happy in this short-lived career assigned him here below. Believe, and Faith shall illuminate the dark recesses of your hearts and pour into them such a flood of light as shall dazzle you with its heavenly beauty. This divine effusion of Faith will teach you that we are the children of God, created and placed on earth for some time, awaiting our reward in the kingdom of the blest. How beautiful is Faith to the believing soul ! It enlightens the dark and gloomy days of our mortal pilgrimage.

II. Now that we have an idea of Faith, I say "*that without it, it is impossible to please God !*"

Faith is necessary for our physical existence as well as for the development of our intelligence and the acquirement of human science. When we were young, our mothers said to us : "This is good," and we ate it ; "this is bad," and we abstained from it. Verily indeed we had faith in our parent's wise counsels. It is by means of Faith that we avoid these dangerous substances deadly to human existence. You may never have seen Europe, still you do not doubt of its being. We have never seen George Washington, and still we believe that he lived and was the Father of our country. Why do we believe this ? Because we have faith in the historians of the United States. If we

have a knowledge of arithmetic, grammar, geography or history, do we not owe it to that faith which we placed in our teachers? If Faith is necessary in the natural order, how much more so in the supernatural! The faith which we place in our parents, teachers and political leaders is called human faith, because it is grounded on men's authority; but that Faith by which we believe in the life to come, in the sublime mysteries of the Christian dispensation, is termed divine Faith, because its foundation is God, Who is Infinite Truth. If human faith is necessary to develop our physical existence, how much more so is that divine belief which teaches us the destiny of our souls and the laws of justice and morality!

God alone, brethren, has the right to command our intelligences, and it is the reason why the faith which we have in His word is as necessary and important for the salvation of our souls as human Faith is for the extension of scientific knowledge. Faith is highly praised and recommended by the Sacred Scriptures: "For in Christ Jesus," says St. Paul, "it is neither circumcision that availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith that worketh by charity." (Gal. v.—6.) Elsewhere the great Apostle writes to the Hebrews and declares in the name of God, "that without Faith it is impossible to please God." "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is a rewarder to them

that seek Him." (Heb. xi.—6.) Our Divine Lord strongly inculcates the necessity of Faith: "He that believeth in Him is not judged; but he that doth not believe, is already judged, that is, condemned." (John iii.—18.)

Dear brethren, nothing is more just than this anathema hurled against these proud men who refuse to submit their understanding to His infallible word. Because they think themselves too intelligent to believe, they prove their degradation. Pride is the cause of such intellectual rebellion. What would you think of your child who, when advised as to his welfare, refuses to believe you and rebels against your authority, saying: "Father, mother, I do not believe a word of what you say; I despise your teachings—they are untrue." Tell me, parents, what would be your astonishment on hearing such sentiments coming from the lips of your child. Behold, dear parents, these proud feelings in the hearts of the impious men who refuse their Creator the homage of their intellects and try to impugn His divine teachings by cunningly-devised sophistries.

Brethren, do you think that God, the God of all truth and sanctity, will welcome those in His kingdom who have refused to believe His divine words? Away with such an illusion! No! no! unbelievers atheists, infidels, Christ the Son of the living God has hurled against you words of

everlasting condemnation. Without Faith it is impossible to please God. The obstinate unbeliever is already condemned, he is separated from the society of Christ and His Church. The despising of the word of God is a crime, and is the cause of eternal condemnation. May God in His infinite mercy, dear brethren, guard and protect you from such an error, and may you merit the blessing which He promised to those who believe : " Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed," (John xx.—29) " for Christ shall be their rewarder." Amen.

SERMON IV.

FAITH AND REASON.

We are happy, O sons of Israel, because the things that are pleasing to God are made known to us. (Baruch iv.—4.)

I would like to know, dear brethren, if by placing credence in the political faith of the men whom you follow, that you are compelled by that very fact to renounce your character as rational beings, capable of enjoying the blessings of liberty in their fullest extent. If not, if, on the contrary, you enjoy all the liberty of a free man and even perform a laudable and commendable act of citizenship in believing in the principles of your distinctive party platforms, do you reasonably think for a moment that we Catholics, in believing in the word of God, in His divine teachings, renounce our character and forfeit our claims to be considered intelligent beings? No, certainly no; and if a prophet of the Old Law could say with truth: "Happy we are, sons of Israel, because the things that are pleasing to God are made known to us; we walk in His way by its brightness in the pres-

ence of the light thereof. Give not thy honor to another nor thy dignity to a strange nation, because thou art above all. Be ye of good comfort, O people of God!" (Baruch iv.—2, 3.) If, I say, the sons of Israel, the Jews, could speak thus, with far greater reason can we, born under the New Law, cry out: "Holy nation, enjoy your happiness by your Faith in the word of God; you walk in the truth and in the splendor of its light. Your honor and dignity are above all nations."

In fact, dear brethren, our Faith does not rest upon human authority, but upon the infallible teachings of the only Son of God. Our belief in the word of God can never be in contradiction to reason. Every day we behold men renowned for their researches in the domain of art and science, proud to be enrolled under the banner of a celebrated master whose teachings they revere. Even we ourselves esteem the wisdom, prudence and erudition of our teachers when we say: "I had So and So for a teacher."

Dear brethren, what comparison can be made between the most enlightened scientist of our age or any of the preceding ones, in contrast to Him who is the source of all knowledge, human and divine. The last and the least of us can stand before the most illustrious scholar and say: "I had for a teacher Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Incarnate Wisdom. From Him I have received, learned the

immortal destiny of my soul, and that its dwelling-place is heaven. Through Him I know the truths which I must believe, the virtues which I must practice and the sacraments which I must receive; the word of that Master can never lead astray, because as a God, He possesses the fulness of science." Therefore, as my belief does not rest upon human authority, what can be repugnant to man's reason to say every night and every morning: "O my God, I firmly believe all the sacred truths which the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, and Thou art Truth itself."

The truths contained in the Christian religion are not as difficult of comprehension as the many opinions promulgated by men whose names are synonymous for ideals in progressive thought and higher intellectual life. For 1900 years the most eminent leaders in the vanguard of the world's progress have bowed before the divinity of Christ and acknowledged the beauty and sublimity of his teachings. Witness Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, Buckland, Miller, Biot, Ampère, Chalmers, Cuvier, etc., etc., men who found no difficulty in being believers in Christ and profound students at the same time. Witness the glorious array of martyrs, learned men, judges, magistrates, doctors, rich and poor, who have shed their blood in attestation of the divinity of Christ and of His

word, when, to escape the cruel torments of the tyrants, a mere word would have sufficed to set them free and be loaded down with earthly dignities and honors.

And you, holy doctors, whose science and knowledge was so vast and deep, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Bazil, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, the flower of human intelligence,—why were you so happy in proclaiming yourselves disciples of Christ? Hear their answer: "Because Christ is God, and the noblest use that a man can make of his intelligence is to submit it to God."

Yes, dear brethren, every line in their works, every action in their lives, cast an effulgent halo over the Faith which they valued so highly. Who can tell the number of the many elevated intelligences who sought a refuge in the bosom of Faith? How many have found in it their dignity, their nobility and their entire satisfaction? A few months ago, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of modern chemists, Pasteur, a man who claimed the admiration of scientists and pupils, died in the Catholic Faith, fortified by the last rites of the Church, asserting with his expiring accents his faith in the divinity of Christ and the infallibility of His Church. You see, dear brethren, that this eminent man as well as the saints whose names I have mentioned, justly valued the wisdom and dignity of our holy Faith.

After these illustrious examples, what can our adversaries say? They are overwhelmed by such a roll-call of fame, and retire in confusion and disgrace. Slaves to their ignoble passions, they wish there were no immortal soul, no heaven, no hell; because they are afraid of hell, and cannot admit the existence of the latter without admitting the existence of the former. Renan, the most notorious atheist of our day, tells us that "Christ is the most perfect man that ever lived on earth." Such a being, possessing the perfections of Christ, could not be guilty of blasphemy and lying. Still, He has proclaimed Himself a God, and even wrought miracles to confirm His word. He even rose from the dead, and this is an incontrovertible fact. Should we not rather place our confidence in Him Who was the most perfect man that ever lived and Who proclaimed His divinity, rather than in a so-called philosopher and propounder of novelty as Renan, who, in spite of his ability as a writer, has certainly no claim in the eyes of man to either honesty of purpose or purity of intention?

Unfortunate atheists! Keep for yourselves your errors and contradictions! Keep for yourselves your bestial instincts! But for us Christians we know, by the light of our intelligences, that we are far above the brute creation, that our immortal souls are made to the image and likeness of God,

that after death we are called to enjoy everlasting happiness, if we have here below fulfilled our duties as Christians. This is the teaching of our Faith, this is what we believe, and our belief rests upon Christ's word. In acknowledging the agreement between Faith and reason, I shall not debase my intelligence ; on the contrary I shall ennoble it, and consecrate its powers to the service of my Lord and Master.

But I pray you to remember, dear brethren, that Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue. Remember that we keep it in our hearts by prayer, and that it is only by the means of grace that we can recover it if we are so unfortunate as to lose it ; that it is by prayer also that we can obtain it for those who are near and dear to us. We cannot see the sun except by its light ; similarly we cannot come to a knowledge of God and believe in Him unto salvation without His grace.

Some men have become blind on account of gazing upon the sun too long ; learned men have become atheists in trying to search into the inscrutable mysteries of Divine Providence. " He that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory." (Prov. xxv.—27.) Others have sought darkness, and their eyes, unused to the light of heaven, were afterwards too weak to stand it. This is a very apt picture of men surrendering themselves to their passions. Faith troubles them,

remorse groans at them pitilessly, they avoid the contemplation of the divine teachings of Faith. Dear brethren, let us keep the sacred gift of Faith in our hearts and minds. Faith alone can illuminate our path through life ; Faith alone can guide and direct our steps toward that immortal home in which awaits us the Author of our Faith, Who can never ask of us anything contrary to reason, for He is the Creator of both, and cannot be the author of two contradictions. Faith shall lead us to enjoy the grandeurs of the beatific vision, which the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. (I. Cor. ii.—9.) Amen.

SERMON V.

QUALITIES OF THE FAITH.

Whosoever believeth in Me will not perish, but will have everlasting life. (John iii.—15.)

The acceptation of your political belief, my dear brethren, depends entirely upon your own faith in its utility and strength. You must put an entire, a firm, an active faith in the principles for which you are fighting—principles guiding your intelligence, established by the leading men of your party, and placed before your eyes by proofs of indisputable value.

I say, dear brethren, that we Christians, in order not only to see our divine Faith accepted by the whole world, but even to save our souls, must believe firmly, entirely and effectively in it. We must therefore be ready to practice what we believe. The truth of the Catholic Church is incontrovertible, for can we deny that Jesus Christ came down on earth to die for our salvation? No, certainly not! The miracles He has wrought the sanctity of His life, the sublimity of His doc-

trine, the divine love of His heart, shown so conspicuously in the awe-inspiring tragedy of Calvary, His glorious Resurrection, are all eloquent witnesses that God not only gave His only-begotten Son to the world, but that His Son is also a God, and that those who believe in Him will have life everlasting. (John iii.—16.)

Read history; the monuments of ages, the triumphs of our modern civilization, even the very graves of our cemeteries proclaim aloud the divinity of Christ. Why, O holy Apostles, have you endured so many fatigues, dangers and persecutions? Why have you journeyed to unknown lands to plant there the banner of Christian Faith, if the divinity of Christ is a farce, or His existence a myth; why have you, O holy martyrs, men imbued with an intense love of God, suffered excruciating pain and torments, if not to proclaim that Jesus is in very truth the Son of the living God? Why has the whole earth been deluged in the blood of Christian martyrs if not to attest the divinity of the lowly Nazarene! Why has the heathen world renounced the degrading rites of paganism and received the glad tidings of redemption? Yes, indeed, every age bears witness to the glorious power of the Christian Faith, to the sanctification and vivifying power of Christian truth. Are we to suppose that men, blind votaries of a sensuous worship, victims of their pas-

sions and propensities, would so easily have renounced their criminal pleasures and embraced the rigorous and austere morality of the Gospel, if it were not divine ? Preposterous assumption ! It is only the divinity of Christ which can adequately explain this wonderful transformation. Visit the magnificent cathedrals of Europe, erected in those days of Christian Faith,—when the highest ambition of most men, and the few of to-day, was to honor the Almighty—and admire their exquisite proportions and architectural beauties, and you will behold a faint proof of the faith of these ages in the divinity of Christ. Nothing was too great nor too precious to honor the earthly dwelling-place of the Son of God. Go to our cemeteries and behold over the graves of your loved ones the sacred sign of redemption, and ask yourselves what does it signify. A little reflection will convince you that it is a mute and eloquent witness to the divinity of Christ, Who by it redeemed the human race. Who can consistently deny the truths of our holy Faith ? Who can deny that Christ is a God, and that to submit our reason to God is the noblest act of homage which we can present the Divine Majesty ?—for "to serve God is to reign."

But, dear brethren, our Faith must be *entire*, *complete*.

We must believe, without exception, all the articles of Faith and the developments which the

Church can give them ; because the Holy Ghost dwells with the Church, which represents the authority of God here below. " The spirit of God shall abide with the Church unto length of days," says St. Matthew. (xxviii.—20.) Here is a watch. It keeps time correctly. Why ? Because its mechanism is complete ; but take off a wheel, even the smallest, and it stops suddenly ; and unless the injury is repaired the watch becomes worthless. Now a simple and undivided faith in the mysteries of the divine dispensation is the basis of all virtue and the source of all grace ; but if through pride or self-love we refuse our assent to any article of Christain belief, Faith is no more in the heart, and our intelligence, like the broken watch, needs a divine assistance to correct its erring judgment. Our belief becomes a mere human opinion, subject to all the vagaries of our fertile imaginations.

If we do not believe all that the Church teaches we forfeit our title to be called her children. We must submit our intelligences to the Author of all knowledge. Suppose a child were to say to its parents : " Father and mother, I believe you in this matter, but I do not believe you in that one." What would you think of the child's obedience and submission to parental authority? Now if parents deserve love, respect and submission from their children, on account of the dignity of their station in life, with far greater reason must we

submit to the life-giving words of Christ, Who speaks to us through His spouse, the Church.

Our faith must be *firm*. It is related of St. Louis, King of France, that he was one day invited to witness a miracle which occurred during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Our Lord manifested Himself in the host under the form of a beautiful child. He refused to witness this prodigy of love, and remarked : " No ; it is enough for me to know that the Catholic Church teaches this truth of the divine presence of the Saviour in the consecrated host ; I believe it more firmly than if I saw my Lord with my bodily eyes." And he refused to witness a miracle which astonished all Paris. On his dying bed, before the administration of the Holy Viaticum, the priest asked him : " King, do you believe that you are going to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacred host ? " " Do I believe ? " answered the dying monarch ; " yes, and more firmly than if I were to behold them with the eyes of my body."

Our Faith must be *effective*, that is, accompanied by good works. The Faith without works is a dead Faith. It would be of no use, in the eyes of God, to believe the truths which the Church teaches if we do not perform the obligations imposed on us by them. Faith is the trunk, the body of the tree, but the good works are the fruits borne by that tree.

Let us see, then, dear brethren, if we practice what we believe. We believe in God; why then should we be ashamed of practicing what He commands? In your own conscience you recognize God as your Sovereign Lord and Master; why should you blush for Him before men? Fear and tremble to hear this anathema: "If any man will deny Me before men, I shall deny him before My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. x.—32.) We know that God is all-powerful, that He is our Creator, Redeemer and Sovereign Good; why do we not honor Him as such? Do we pray to Him night and morning? Do we go to Mass on Sundays and holy-days of obligation? If you believe you have an immortal soul, why do you not work out its salvation? You work the greater part of the week to supply temporal wants and to lay up earthly treasures which fade away before your eyes, and still in your blindness of heart you refuse to care for that immortal soul which is destined for everlasting glory. You must be true to yourselves in this momentous duty. Go to Mass every Sunday, approach the Sacraments every month, be punctual in saying your prayers daily,—in a word, practice what you believe, and you shall not perish, but will have everlasting life. Amen.

SERMON VI.

REVELATION.

God spoke to the Fathers by the Prophets and by His Son. (Heb. i.—1, 2.)

There is but one source of Faith, brethren—God. He, in His divine bounty, has revealed to us the truths which are the object of our Faith. This is what we call Revelation.

Of course Revelation was absolutely necessary for us in order that we might possess a complete knowledge of the truths and precepts pertaining to the supernatural order.

St. Paul affirms its existence when he says that "God at sundry times and in divers manners spoke, in times past to the Fathers by the Prophets ; in these days, He hath spoken to us by His Son Jesus Christ." (Heb. i.—1, 2.) Our very reason leads us to believe that the dogmatical truths that we believe must have been revealed by a divine power.

In the first place, at the very beginning of the world revelation was made to Adam, Noah, and

Abraham. But this was a mere pencil of light compared with the dazzling effulgence of Christian Revelation.

Again, God beholding this first revelation disregarded by man in his degradation and corruption, gave a written revelation to His chosen people, the Jews. This, in time, became also disregarded.

It was finally only in the person of Jesus Christ that the world received the fulness of that revelation which has elevated it to such a sublime state.

This evangelical revelation, confirmed by the prophecies and above all by the miracles of Jesus Christ, preached to the world by the Apostles and their successors, shall subsist until the consummation of ages.

Firstly, Christ proved the existence of Revelation by miracles. A miracle being an event or effect contrary to the established constitution and course of things, or a deviation from the known laws of nature, can be wrought only by God, because God alone can change or modify the laws which He has established. So when a miracle is wrought, we must acknowledge it to be the work of God; and if this miracle is performed in order to testify to the truth of a doctrine, as it was the case with Christ, we must admit that this doctrine comes from God. God cannot work a miracle to prove a lying doctrine. Consequently, when we resist a

doctrine upheld by duly authenticated miracles we resist God, the Source of infinite truth and sanctity.

Besides, "the miracle," in the words of Lactantius, "is most becoming the divine nature, which must not speak as a philosopher, but as a master; and not base his religion upon arguments, but upon facts. Thus human nature, which is so feeble in understanding many things, may be led astray by sophisms; but a fact is too plain to lead it into error."

Secondly, God proved the existence of Revelation not only by the miracles of His Son, but likewise by the prophecies. The prophecy is a sure and evident prediction of future events which took place in the time pointed out beforehand, the knowledge of which could not be obtained at the time nor acquired by natural causes. The prophecy is the word of God as the miracle is His work. Prophecies as well as miracles can only emanate from God. So as soon as a prophecy is true, it must come from God, for Whom the past and the future is ever present.

Moses gave the prophecy as a proof of divine interference: "Thou shalt have this sign: whatsoever that same prophet foretelleth, in the name of the Lord, and it cometh not to pass: that thing the Lord hath not spoken." (Deut. xviii.—22.) God Himself says by Isaias: "I am God Who

sheweth from the beginning the things that shall be at last, and from ancient times the things that as yet are not done." (Is. xlvi.—10.) Of course our Blessed Lord said : "There shall arise false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect." (Matt. xxiv.—24.) But actually in our day no miracle, no prophecy must be accepted as such unless the Church has sanctioned them by her authority.

False prophets and false miracles do not invalidate the true ones. A counterfeit coin only gains circulation on account of its striking resemblance to the genuine one. After all, the miracles and prophecies imposed by the Church on the faith of her children are contained in the Holy Books. These books are a complete and perfect work, and with the Apocalypse, form the inspired Scripture, for Christ is the end of the Law.

In conclusion, I will say, brethren, that Revelation gives to a man everything that he needs. As an intelligent being, it reveals to him doctrines that enlighten his mind. As a moral being, it gives him a code of wise laws which regulates his life and curbs the passions of his heart. As a social being, it gives him a law of charity which guides him in his intercourse with his fellow men. Aspiring to perfection and happiness, he needs the necessary means to attain this end, and he

finds them in the ethical code of divine Revelation.

All these truths of Revelation are contained in the Sacred Scripture and Tradition, for, according to the Vatican Council, "divine Revelation is, according to the faith of the Universal Church declared by the Council of Trent, contained in the Holy Books and in the unwritten Traditions which, having been received by the Apostles from the divine lips of Jesus Christ, or having been left by the same Apostles to which the Holy Ghost dictated them, have reached us, hand to hand, from Christ to our day."

Such, brethren, is the groundwork of our Faith, the Revelation. Is it any wonder nowadays when learned men are cast about by every wind of doctrine that they seek for the pure doctrine of Christianity, the infallible teachings of the Catholic Church—the only guardian of Revelation—the only depositary of Truth? Amen.

SERMON VII.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Thou hast known the Holy Scripture from thy infancy. . . All Scripture inspired of God is profitable. (II. Tim. iii.—15, 16.)

The Holy Scripture is the word of God written by men to whom God has given the inspiration to write it and whom He has guided by His spirit of truth in preserving them from error and deception.

The Holy Scripture is known also under the names of the Bible, the Holy Books, the Vulgate. The Holy Scripture, before Christ, was entrusted to the care of the Synagogue ; since then it has been under the fostering care of the Church, which has collected all the books under the title of "Canonical Books."

The Holy Scripture is divided into two parts : The Old Testament, containing 45 books, referring to history, didactic teachings and prophecies ; and the New Testament, containing 27 books, including the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and the Apocalypse.

In the first place, let us see the greatness of the Holy Scripture ; and *in the second place*, its utility.

We will be convinced of the greatness of the Scripture if we consider its object. In fact, it is a revelation of the nature and of the perfections of God, of the origin and destiny of man ; but above all, it is valued for the sacred prophecies which relate so directly to the great design of redemption. In a word, the Scripture prepares the coming of the Messiah ; and when He has come, it speaks of His mission, of His immortal work. The Bible is the Book of books. "Should we only consider," says Rousseau, "its style, its literature, all that contributes to place it far beyond the works of philosophers, nothing can be compared to it." The Holy Scripture owes its greatness, above all, to its inspiration. St. Paul says it is a book divinely inspired. (II. Tim. iii.—15, 16.)

In fact the Holy Ghost Himself bade the sacred writers to compose it. He guided them in the choice of the subjects which He wanted them to treat ; He enlightened them so that they could not err ; He revealed to them truths which they could never have known by themselves. In a word, it was His inspiration which made the Bible the word of God, and the Way, the Truth and the Life. (John xiv.—6.)

The inspiration of the Bible, brethren, is confirmed by the Catholic Church, which always

taught it by her infallible authority. The Council of Trent hurls an anathema against those who impugn this divine teaching. Besides, the whole tradition of the Church preceding this declaration of the Tridentinal Council, points to the same faith in its inspiration. The inspiration is extended to all parts of the Canonical Books (Vatican Council), and the true sense is defined by the Church, who is the infallible expositor and supreme judge of the interpretation of Scripture.

The attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Bible at the close of the nineteenth century is clearly explained by our great Pontiff, Leo XIII., in his admirable letter on "The Study of the Scripture" "It is absolutely wrong," he says, "to narrow inspiration to certain parts of our Holy Scripture, or to admit that our sacred writers have erred. Those who admit inspiration only in things of faith and of morals, and in nothing beyond, cannot be tolerated."

Firstly, our reason will easily recognize that the Holy Books always presented to us by the Church as the word of God are authentic; because we can prove it by this, the testimony of the Jews and the martyrdom of the early Christians, who suffered cruel deaths for their belief, and also because these Books bear in themselves the names of their authors, the dates at which they were written—and all these matters defy historical criticisms.

Secondly, reason tells us also that the Bible is true. The writers are witnesses that had no interest to deceive. Even if they wanted to deceive, they could not, on account of the numberless witnesses that saw with them the facts which they relate. So important were these facts, that the existence of the Jewish nation depended upon their truth.

Thirdly, the Books came to us in their entirety. The Jews and the Christians always bore a great affection for these Books, which they kept continually. It was their history and their laws. We can say, brethren, that books which established a religion in the midst of corrupted nations, that prescribed laws aiming at the abolition of their most cherished passions, must have been divinely inspired.

Let us come to the *second point* and see the utility of the Sacred Books. Their usefulness is demonstrated by St. Paul, who says : "All Scripture inspired by God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice." (II. Tim. iii.—16.) The saints also tell us that this divine Book is the book of virtue and sanctity. St. Chrysostom says : "Every syllable is a treasure." St. Cæsarius says, "that the word of God is nothing less than the Body of Jesus Christ." Profane authors themselves have spoken of the utility of the Sacred Scripture. Rousseau said : "The Gospel can never be read without becoming holier."

In conclusion, dear brethren, I cannot exhort you too much to read the Holy Scripture. It is a mine of pure gold; a cave containing pearls of exceeding riches. The Church commands her priests to read it continually, and on Sundays the most solemn parts of her Liturgy are taken from it. Now we must not fall into the contrary error and hold that the reading of the Scripture is necessary for salvation. This would be a very grievous error indeed. "A person," says St. Augustine, "sustained by faith, hope and charity, need not read the Scriptures, unless he is bound to instruct others. Many hermits lived a life of sanctity in the desert without the Holy Books." St. Irenæus tells us of many people, in his time, rich in virtue, who never read the Holy Scripture.

In reading the Holy Bible we should have the proper disposition. We should read it not to contradict nor appear wise, but to become pious and virtuous. "Nothing comes from the wrong interpretation of the Holy Scripture," says St. Augustine, "but heresy." "Search the Scriptures," says St. John. (v.—39.) True; but following the advice of the "Following of Christ," read them with the same spirit in which they have been written. Read them with faith, humility, respect and docility toward the Church.

If we follow this advice we will find in them treasures untold; for the grandest manifestations

of divine and human thought are contained in its sacred leaves. The gems of human oratory lose their luster when placed beside the sublimity of Biblical thought. The periods of cultivated speech lose their rich, flowing harmony when contrasted with the divine simplicity which characterizes the oracles of truth. Let us, brethren, love and reverence the Bible, and often ponder over its inspired readings with fruit to our souls. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

TRADITION.

There are many other things which Jesus did: which are not written. (John xxi.—25.)

The Tradition, brethren, is the word of God unwritten, transmitted verbally by the Apostles to their successors, and which, according to the expression of the Vatican Council, reaches us "from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth." Tradition, which is characterized by its universality, antiquity and unanimity, has the same authority as the Sacred Scripture in matters of Faith.

We will consider briefly the existence of Tradition, and in the second place, where it is to be found.

In the first place, I will prove the existence of Tradition by the testimony of the New Testament, which was written a few years after the Ascension of Christ, and when the doctrine of Christ was spread to the very confines of the Roman Empire. In fact Tradition existed before the Bible. The Evangelists themselves speak of Tradition. St.

John in closing his Gospel says : "But there are also many other things which Jesus did : which, if they were written, the world itself would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John xxi.—25.) These things which Christ did and which were not written, came to us by Tradition. St. Luke says, that after His passion and resurrection, Christ remained forty days upon earth, appearing to His disciples and speaking of the kingdom of God, that is to say, of the Church ; (Acts i.—3) and these instructions have never been written. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, speaks thus : "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle." (II. Thess. ii.—14.) He tells Timothy to hold the form of sound words, which he heard of him, in faith. (II. Tim. i.—13.)

We prove also the existence of Tradition by the very words of Christ when He says : "Going therefore, teach ye all nations, teaching them, preaching the Gospel." (Matt. xxviii.—20.) He gave them the mission to preach, not to write.

We can also prove the existence of Tradition by the practices of the primitive Church, for in the first centuries the Apostles' Creed, which is a summary of the doctrine of Christ, was not written, but taught verbally. It was only on the permission of Gregory the Great that it was put into writing.

This practice of the Church comes from the teaching of the Apostles. St. Vincent of Lerius says: "And everything which has ever been and which is everywhere believed by all the faithful, is necessarily apostolic."

Now, let us see, *in the second place*, where this apostolic Tradition is to be found.

We will find it in the decrees of the councils assembled by the Church. A council is an assemblage of bishops for the purpose of adjusting some points of faith, morals or discipline. It may be Œcumenical, when all the bishops of the world are assembled and presided over by the pope or his legates; National, when it comprises the prelates of a country presided over by a primate or a patriarch; and finally Provincial, when the metropolitan presides over its deliberations. The œcumenical councils are infallible in their decisions, when these decisions are confirmed by the pope. The canons of the others are infallible in so far as they coincide with the faith and teachings of the Roman Pontiff, and that he approves of them.

We shall also find Tradition in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The Fathers of the Church may be divided into two classes, the Greek and the Latin. The former include, among the principal ones, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. John Chrysostom, etc.; the latter, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine and St. Gregory

the Great, etc. Their writings are esteemed on account of their eminent doctrine and the holiness of their lives. Truly, the works of Tertullian and of Origen, although they are not saints, are also looked upon as very important, on account of their antiquity. The unanimity of the Fathers of the Church on any point of doctrine truly constitutes the Tradition of the Church.

In the third place, we find the Tradition of the Church in the Acts of the Apostolic See, whose divine mission is to safeguard and protect the deposit of Faith in all its original purity.

Finally we will find Tradition in the ecclesiastical liturgy. The liturgy was established by the Apostles, after the teachings of the Saviour. It was not written at first, but piously preserved by the Apostles and transmitted by them to the bishops, their successors.

Let us venerate the pious practices of the Church, even though they were not written at first. She is the spouse of the Holy Ghost, Who preserves her from error. When we follow her we cannot make any mistake, for she is the pillar and ground of Truth. Amen.

FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

GOD IN HIMSELF.

First Article.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty.

SERMON IX.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

For he that cometh to God must believe. (Heb. xi.—6.)

My dear Brethren : A friend tells me : " Father, I am a Democrat." " Very well ; but what is the faith of your party ? " " Well ; some members believe in free trade, while others believe in tariff. reform." Another friend tells me : " Father, I am a Republican." " Very well ; but what do you believe?" He answers me : " I believe in protection." Now, dear brethren, as members of the Church of God, as Catholics, I ask you to-day, " What do you believe ? " What do I believe ?

I Believe :

In God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ;

In Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord ;

Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ;

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried ;

Descended into hell, the third day rose from the dead ;

Ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God ;

From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I Believe :

In the Holy Ghost ;

In the Holy Catholic Church; in the communion of saints ;

In the remission of sins ;

In the resurrection of the body ;

In the life everlasting.

This is our belief, dear brethren. This is the glorious symbol of the Catholic Faith by which we profess our belief in God as the *Supreme Being*, in God as the divine *Creator*, in God as the *Redeemer*, in God as a *Sanctifier*, in God as a *Rewarder*. And this belief we have learned through the ministry of the Church, which has been founded by Christ on His Apostles, and whose mission is to teach. All the ages of the Church have reverenced this Creed, which has ever been acknowledged as the symbol of Christian truth. Let us glance at the history of its promulgation.

Christ had just left this world on Ascension Day. His Apostles remained ten days in Jerusalem, persevering in prayer and awaiting for the advent

of the Holy Ghost, Who was to pour upon them the gifts of His spirit, by means of which they were to preach the words of their Divine Master, and thus renovate the face of the earth. On the feast of Pentecost or Whitsunday the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity, came down upon these men so weak and so human in their desires and aspirations. The Holy Ghost came down upon them and they were immediately transformed. By His divine inspirations He changed their minds from weak, vacillating men, timorous and fearful ; they were suddenly transformed into brave and fearless champions for the truth of Christ's word. They issued forth from their retreat breathing the charity of their Master, (II. Cor. v.—14) and preached to the assembled multitudes the Passion, the Death, the glorious Resurrection the Ascension of Christ. Seized with the ardor of their Saviour, they followed His divine bequest : " Go, teach all nations. I am the Saviour of them all. Preach the Gospel to every creature, (St. Matt. xxviii.—19) and travel to the farthermost parts of the world, in order to carry to them that sit in the darkness of death (Luke i.—79) the saving doctrine of Christian truth." St. Peter, the head of the new Church, takes his course toward the Queen of the world, the capital of paganism and corruption, Rome ; St. James journeys to Spain ; St. Thomas to India ; some remained in

Jerusalem or in the adjoining countries ; some leave for foreign lands.

But, O Holy Apostles, before you depart for these unknown regions from which you may never return, I wish to ask you a question : "You desire to establish a new religion, embracing in her arms the entire world. Tell me, then, how the Indian instructed by St. Thomas, the Spaniard by St. James, the Gentile by St. Peter, and all the different races of men who will receive the Gospel of Christ, can recognize that they profess the same Faith and that they are disciples of the same Master." "Well," they will answer, "the Holy Ghost Who inspires us has foreseen the difficulty, and before we separate for the conquest of the world we have summed up in a short formula the principal truths taught by our Master. This compendium will be taught by Peter in Rome, by John in Ephesus, by James in Spain, by Thomas in India and by all who preach the divinity of our Faith. It shall never change, and shall remain a standing proof of the immutability of our doctrine."

We all know the Apostles' Creed by heart, dear brethren ; let me add a few more words upon the reverence which we should have for it and upon our fidelity in teaching and in reciting it.

We should have a great *respect* for the Apostles' Creed, because its first Author was Jesus Christ, who left His heavenly home and the splendor of

His Divine Father to teach us the truths contained in it. However, it is well to remember that this symbol is but an abridgment of our doctrine. The Apostles wanted it to be within the reach of all. Thus they have said: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," meaning by this profession, "I was baptized, and by Baptism I became a Christian; therefore I belong to the Christian Society, and am consequently obliged to obey the commands of that society which shall explain to me the true meaning of each article of the Creed." Thus the Church, with her office as teacher, will tell us that there are seven Sacraments instituted by Christ to give grace; that there are ten commandments of God and six of the Church; that if we desire to be saved by an efficacious faith, we must hear the voice of the ministers of the Church, according to the words of Christ: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." (Luke x.—16.) This is the reason why explanations of the Apostles' Creed are so necessary, and why so much respect is due them, because they come from Christ Himself.

St. Augustine says: "This compendium of our Faith enlightens our mind, without burdening our memory. It is milk for little children, and light for the strong." The Doctors of the Church say, "that this symbol of our Faith includes all the truths which we must believe. As we mix

together the odors of the lily, the violet, the carnation to make a precious perfume, in like manner, the Apostles' Creed exhales the odor which sanctifies and redeems the whole world. Like a rich man who journeys far from home and converts his properties into gold and precious stones so as to travel unencumbered, the Apostles have abridged the Holy Scriptures in this Creed which bears their name, into twelve articles, which are as many gems which the faithful can easily possess and retain on their journey toward everlasting happiness.

Who can tell the numerous tokens of respect and esteem that have been paid to this beautiful symbol of our holy Faith since the days of its composition. Godfathers and godmothers recite it at the solemn rite of Baptism as an evidence of the faith of the new-born in Christ. The faithful recite it daily in their morning and evening prayers. On the Lord's Day, during the august sacrifice of the New Law, it is sung as a public testimony of our faith in its saving articles.

Not only must we love and respect it, but we must be *faithful to recite and teach it.* What glory! What honor! What consolation to think that, no matter what our position in life may be, we have the incomparable dignity of repeating the inspired words of the Apostles—words which first fell from the adorable lips of Jesus Christ Himself.

It is the same Creed recited by a St. Louis on

a throne, and by a St. Benedict Labre, a beggar of the street. It is the same Creed which claimed from the powerful pen of St. Augustine such magnificent eulogiums. Speaking to the neophytes, he says : "Be faithful in reciting this sweet symbol of our Faith, in the morning on getting up, and in the evening before retiring. Every morning you cover your body with suitable garments, do not forget, by reciting the Apostles' Creed, to clothe your souls with the belief of the truths which are her best ornaments and pledges of salvation." Who can doubt the importance and necessity of reciting often the Apostles' Creed. And I admire the faith of a Peter of Verona, who lived in the thirteenth century, writing with the blood flowing from his wound, on the road upon which he fell, murdered for the Faith : "I believe in God."

Two practical conclusions, my dear brethren, are to be drawn from this instruction—two resolutions which will be helps for our sanctification.

First, to recite with great attention the Apostles' Creed. Mothers, teach it to your children and to those with whose education you may be charged. *Secondly*, let us love the truths taught by the Creed and adhere to them with all our heart and soul. If we do so, we will receive at the supreme moment of death, when all worldly things will appear to us in their true light, the choicest graces of Him who has proclaimed the sacred truths of Revelation in the symbol of His Apostles. Amen.

SERMON X.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

By the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known by them thereby. (Wisdom xiii.—5.)

There is, brethren, a Creator of all things. In other words: There is a God. When we recite the Creed, we begin with these words: "I believe in God." The real and absolute meaning of them is the acknowledgment of the existence of a Supreme Being, Who is the ruler of this world, and Who shall one day reward the just and punish the wicked.

I will not try to bring before your eyes the many evidences of the existence of God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, because you know it, you believe it. Deep down in your hearts lie the innate proofs, which are far more incontrovertible than the high-sounding phrases of scientists and philosophers. Nevertheless, to make you stronger in the Faith and to give you an opportunity of acknowledging, by an act of adoration, the exist-

ence of Almighty God, I will recall to your minds a few arguments produced by theologians in demonstrating this solemn fact.

The blasphemous assumption presented by so-called atheists is this : There is no God, no Supreme Being ; everything which we behold in this beautiful creation of ours is the result of chance or an accidental meeting of atoms ; that by a tranformation of matter are wrought the marvelous wonders of the physical and intellectual world ; that at death everything ends, the oblivion of the grave speaking against the Christian hope for a higher life.

These so-called atheists are divided into three classes :—

First, we find the libertine and the impious man who parades his irreligious opinions and tries to persuade himself and his disciples that the existence of God is a mere myth, the invention of priestcraft, and a good enough opinion for women and children to believe. These men are consistent with their belief ; for as a thief hates justice and its administrators, because he is liable to be punished by them, the libertine hates the existence of God and fears His justice, which shall one day mete out to him a condign punishment for his abominations and crimes.

The second class of atheists is almost similar to the first, because vice is deeply seated in their

hearts, and their consciences are seared by their frequent falling into sin. This is the cause of their negation of the Divinity. The proud, the avaricious, the impure,—all these unfortunate beings, filled with self-love and hatred, like the licentious and impious man, cannot worship at their different shrines unless they discard the divine existence of a supreme power. They indulge in long arguments in trying to prove the truth of their assertion—arguments very unsatisfactory to their propounders and still more unsatisfactory to their votaries. They desire to abolish eternal punishment, because it is detrimental to their peace of mind. Like the criminals who harass society, they would feign cast this burden into oblivion. "Verily, indeed, a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind." Some of them, carried away by pride and an inordinate love for notoriety, have advanced sensational doctrines; they covet human applauses. Puffed up with the plaudits of ignorant people, they loudly assert the non-existence of a creative power. Indeed, they can deny God, for He is a Spirit. We cannot see Him with our bodily eyes; but those who are not like the disciples of a Paine, a Voltaire or an Ingersoll, can behold and know Him, for by the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known by them thereby.

How very often these so-called atheists, in the supreme moment of life, if not struck down suddenly, when the finger of Death is pressed upon their brows, disavow their erroneous beliefs and call upon that God for consolation and help, despite their denial of His existence during their lives. Death is indeed the supreme test of a man's character and the infallible revealer of his heart. How many of those to whom God has given time upon their death-beds, have confessed that pride, human respect, or some other subtle passion led them to deny the existence of God. It is related that one day, a celebrated atheist was discoursing at table upon the origin of man, declaring that he had sprung up into being like a mushroom. Seeing his audience rather cold in receiving his opinions, he said: "I did not think that I was the only one here that did not believe in the being of a God." "You are mistaken, sir," said the lady of the house; "my dog and my cat enjoy also the same opinion, but they have the good sense not to express it." Some time afterward, says Martinez in his "Answers to Great Problems," this atheist died in the Christian Faith and confessed, after his reception of the Holy Viaticum, that pride had led him into incredulity.

The third class of men who do not acknowledge the existence of God are the so-called learned scientists. They claim to prove the non-existence

of God by reason. To these learned men, if they are sincere in their belief, I would say : " Make use of your reason, and declare that reason and intelligence cannot be evolved from inorganic matter and consequently must be the work of a Supreme Creator."

I would say to them : " Come with me into this beautiful church. Do you see these walls built upon a solid basis ? Do you see these beautiful windows so symmetrically moulded to let in the light of day ? Behold these pillars, their bases are in proportion to their height ! Gaze upon the architectural beauties of keystone and corbeil, flated arch and glowing column, and ask yourselves : " Has this beautiful creation of the architect's thought sprung into existence from nothing, or has it been the result of the successive transformation of matter ? " I can readily imagine these gentlemen turning round and saying : " He wants to make fools of us ; he is simply foolish to ask such questions. This building is the work of a learned and skilful architect."

My dear friends, they are right ; and now let you and me leave this church and witness a still grander spectacle. Behold Nature in all her work ! See the plants, examine the flowers, look at the trees and their fruits ; see the animals of every species and form, adapted to the divers functions of their being. Behold man, the visible king of creation,

and admire the wonderful beauty and design manifested in his creation! Raise your eyes from the earth and its works and gaze upon the lofty vault of the heavens; behold the planets revolving around the sun, the millions of stars pursuing their stately courses through the millions of years that have passed, without deviating one iota from their immense orbits! After the contemplation of such a sublime spectacle, who can dare say that all these magnificent works are the result of "chance," a mere nothing, a word which tells our ignorance? If we say a man is a fit subject for the alienist who affirms that a church has had no builder, no architect, with far greater reason must we discredit the assertion of the man who declares there is no God, no Divine Creator.

Yes, dear brethren, God exists. "By the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known by them thereby." God existed centuries before the gigantic planets of the solar system were cast into space, millions of ages before the star dust of heaven assumed concrete form. God always existed; He had no beginning as He has no end; He existed perfectly happy in Himself and His divine nature. All the civilized nations of the world from the creation of man, along with the poor untutored savage wandering under the tropical sun or around the poles, have believed in a superior power, and

cling tenaciously to that heaven-imprinted desire of Divinity. The entire creation, from man down to the blade of grass, all loudly proclaim and acknowledge, each one in their own way, the belief of a God, and render homage to His divinity. Amen.

SERMON XI.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

God is a spirit. (John iv.—24.)

What is God, dear brethren ? Who can give a definition of the Supreme Being, satisfactory to our hearts and to our reason ? Your little catechism will answer for me : " God is a pure Spirit and cannot be anything else." He is a Being infinitely perfect and so far above the level of our thoughts and minds that it will ever be an impossibility for us, while in this world, to comprehend Him and to understandHis nature fully. Can a small rivulet contain as much water as a mighty river ? Can a small vase contain the waters of the ocean, whose immensity and depths are still unknown to many ?

No, brethren, assuredly no ; and Thou, Divine Beauty and Incomprehensible Nature, which shall excite the admiration, love and homage of the elect during the ages of eternity ; Divine Intelligence of the only pure Being in which dwells the grandeur and sublimity of the Deity,—how can our weak and feeble intelligences ever grasp an idea of Thy greatness and infinity ?

But, dear brethren, if we cannot fully understand God and examine the secrets of His divine nature, we can know Him and have an idea of what He is, by placing Him far above the marvels of creation which draw forth the admiration and amazement of the human race.

Nations seated in the shadow of death, whose intellects were not yet illuminated by the light of the true Faith, though they believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, have thought that God was the sun, and I think that their belief was not baser than that of those who place their faith in fortune-tellers, mediums, etc., thus giving to creatures a perfection, a power, an attributewhich belongs to God alone. However, this belief was false and foolish, because the splendor of the sun can be shrouded by either night or a cloudy day, and God is more powerfulth an the sun, which is a creature obeying the supreme commands of its Creator in revolving in ethereal space and fulfilling its laws. This glorious orb, faithful to the command of God, performs its daily motion and preserves life and creation upon the surface of our planet. And yet this magnificent orb, thousands of times larger than our little earth, is nothing in the eyes of God when compared to the value of one human soul.

The sun is destined to decay. It is a child of dissolution. Even science has computed the years of its reign over the solar system, of which

our earth forms a part ; but the human soul never dies ; it lives forever with her hopes, her fears, her aspirations, her immortality, and with this beautiful attribute of immortality she is called to praise, to bless and to adore her Divine Creator for all eternity.

God is a pure Spirit. He has no body like ours. If sometimes we speak, according to the Scriptures, of the finger of God, the eye of God, the hand of God, we simply use human language to express our very inadequate conception of the personality of God. If I thought it well, dear brethren, to explain this elementary doctrine, it is because I wish to answer this objection beforehand. If God has no eyes, how can He see all things ? If He has no hands, how can He form man out of dust ? Tell me, dear brethren, if the wind has any hands to press the sails of the vessel and carry her across the boundless seas? The excessive heat of your stoves has no bodily power, still it compels you to withdraw from before it. Then the wind and the heat are creatures of God, invisible to you, but showing their power. So it is with God : His hands are His almighty power ; His eyes, His infinite knowledge.

Yes, God is a Spirit, a perfect Being, above all other beings, no matter how powerful they may be. St. Augustine, in his " Confessions," tells us that when tormented by doubts he exclaimed : " O

God, to Whom adoration and love are due, what art Thou? I said to the large universe, to the beings living upon its surface: 'Are ye not my God?' And they answered: 'No, we pass away, and God alone remains forever.' Then I said to the sea and the inhabitants of its bosom: 'Are ye not my God?' And the ocean replied: 'In spite of the immensity of my shores and the unfathomable depths of my abysses, I am not thy God.' Then raising my eyes toward heaven, I exclaimed: 'Stars studding the celestial dome, so immense and so beautiful, and thou, O Sun, so bright in thy splendor, are ye not my God?' And all answered: 'We are but the creatures of that God whom thy reason and thy heart seeketh; we proclaim His glory and sing His praises in our celestial harmony, because He made us.' Then," continues the holy doctor, "I looked upon my soul and understood that God was not limited by space or time. I understood that He is a perfume above all perfumes, a light above all lights, a harmony above all harmonies."

Yes, God here below appears to us as an ocean of all delights, of power and majesty, although we cannot frame a perfect definition of Him. A prince once requested a pagan philosopher to define: "What God is." The philosopher demanded three days to think the matter over. When the time had expired, he demanded another

delay, and thus went on for some time. The prince becoming impatient at the long silence of the wise man, asked him the reason of his silence. The philosopher replied: "I require such a long time to scrutinize the divine nature, that I am overwhelmed by its immensity and glory. God alone can define Himself." Indeed, it was a wise reply; but I prefer the answer given by a Christian knight in the train of St. Louis, king of France—the Duke of Joinville—when asked upon the same subject, answered in his simple and rustic way: "God? What is God? It is so good a *thing* that better cannot be." Amen.

SERMON XII.

THE UNITY OF GOD.

The Lord our God is one. (Deut. vi.—4.)

If I were to put this question to the youngest child attending our Sunday school, "Is there but one God?" he would immediately answer me: "There is but one God, because being supreme and infinite, God cannot have an equal." This elementary truth which appears to us so simple and so easy, was, before the coming of Christ, unknown to the whole world save the Jewish nation, then the chosen people of God.

Paganism worshipped idols and believed in a plurality of gods. "Everything was God," remarks Bossuet, "but God Himself." Men in all ages and conditions have affirmed the truth of their belief by the shedding of their blood; so in like manner, during the cruel persecution raised by the Roman emperors to destroy Christianity, millions of martyrs suffered the most excruciating torments in order to proclaim their belief in the unity of God. "Offer sacrifices to our divinities,

and you shall go free, loaded with rewards and dignities," was the tempting offer presented by the priests and consuls of pagan Rome. "Your gods have no life, no power—creatures of your base passions. There is but one true God, and before Him alone we bow in adoration," was the courageous reply of these noble men, women and children who spurned the threats of their executioners and rejected the blandishments of fortune to die for the cause of the true God.

In the Old Testament, Almighty God confirmed by numerous sayings the unity of His person, and to guard the Jews against the heinous crime of idolatry, He said to them : "See ye that I alone am and there is no other God besides Me. I will kill and I will cause to live. I will strike and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of My hands." (Deut. xxxii.—39.)

In the New Testament, the unity of God was unquestionably recognized by St. Paul, who, in summing up the teachings of the Bible, says : "There is but one God, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." (Eph. iv.—5.)

Our own common sense upholds this doctrine. A well ruled and disciplined family needs but one head. If the children or mother rebel against the father's authority, nothing but disorder results. Picture to yourselves a large firm in which every one claims authority. The confusion and disorder

which would ensue would be lamentable. Now if there were different gods, each having his own will and the power to realize his designs, what would we behold in this beautiful world of ours? Chaos and confusion. Hence our reason tells us there is but one God commanding the universe and ruling over it.

See the harmony and unity of that supreme power which rules the world and orders all events, shown so clearly in the rotation of the seasons. "Spring, thou shalt grow the herbs of the fields and adorn the earth with thy fairest productions; summer, under the silent rays of the sun, thou shalt ripen the harvest; thou shalt ripen the prairies and prepare the fruits which autumn shall make edible; and, winter, thou shalt be the season of rest, the image of death, in its slumber teaching men to rest at the time and on the days appointed by the Lord." Yes, brethren, only one Being presides over the harmonies of creation, and that Being is the one and true God.

But what are the duties which we must fulfil toward the sovereign Lord and Master? We must adore Him alone, love Him above all and serve Him with fidelity.

We must, I repeat, adore God alone. Nowadays, the devil is not worshipped under the form of Mercury, Jupiter, or Venus; but, tell me, do not these men whose lives are spent in the pursuit of

riches, often acquired by ill-gotten means, in the glorification of their sensual appetites, render homage to Satan no less than the pagans did in their revolting form of worship? Here is a miser. "Tell me, miser, who is your God: the Supreme Being—the One Whom you love above all and to Whom you sacrifice everything?" If he be sincere, pointing to his money, he will say: "This is my God."

Idolaters are all those who make a God of their own, ruling over the only one true God, serving him alone. Idolaters, then, are those men that you see on their way to the drunkard's grave, cursed by this pernicious evil which has crushed woman's heart, sent youth to destruction, outraged modesty and sent it to the abode of infamy and shame. This evil is the God of the drunkard. To him he sacrifices his wife, children, family, honor, reputation, career, and above all, his immortal soul. Ye are idolaters who sacrifice every human consideration and soul for the sake of creatures. Ye who spoil your children by inconsiderate love, are idolaters. Love is beautiful, love is divine; but the heart belongs to God first, and afterward to the creature; we must serve God first, then the creature.

Let me add, brethren, another obligation. We must serve God faithfully! Keep His commandments, whether we receive them in the natural law

or through the voice of His Church. Thus we will fulfil the great duties which we owe to the one true God, the first of which was given on Mt. Sina, in circumstances recorded in the Scriptures : " For the third day was come," they read, " and the morn appeared : behold thunders began to be heard and lightning to flash, a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud. All Mount Sinai was on smoke, because the Lord was come down upon it in fire and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace : and the mount was terrible. The sound of the trumpet grew by degrees louder and louder, and was drawn out to a greater length. The Lord spoke thus and said these words which affirmed His unity : ' I am the Lord Thy God ; thou shalt not have strange Gods before Me.' " (Ex. xix.—61.) Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE BLESSED TRINITY.

And there are three who give testimony in Heaven: The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One. (I. John v.—7.)

As the human intellect is limited and even defective in reference to the power of the understanding, the senses—servants of that intellect—are also limited and defective. Thus our ears cannot catch distant sounds nor our eyes behold objects beyond a certain distance.

People enjoying good sight can admire the sun, the moon, myriads of stars—brilliant dust thrown by the hand of God through the immensity of the celestial sphere ; but this is all the eye can see ; it cannot tell the weight nor the distance of a planet from the earth. But here comes an astronomer. He points his telescope toward the luminous pathway which traverses the sky, and which is known as the " Galaxy " or " Milky Way," and he discovers numerous stars in the very place

where we saw nothing but the blue tint of heaven.

The intellect of man, dear brethren, when not weakened or darkened by human passion, recognizes and sees clearly the existence of God, the Ruler and Supreme Master of the visible universe. He sees clearly, as the physical eye sees the sun, the moon, and the stars, that a perfect order presides over the works of creation, and that consequently there is only one God and Law-giver. But the power of his understanding stops here, and left to himself, the eye of his soul cannot pierce that mystic veil which shrouds the mysteries of eternity. Therefore, to scrutinize more deeply the depths of divinity, to have a knowledge of its mysteries and sublimities, the reason of man needs a help, an instrument, a telescope, through which we shall see God nearer to us, and which shall supply the deficiency of our reason and shall strengthen and enlighten our minds. This telescope is Revelation—it is the word of our Blessed Lord, teaching the truths of wisdom which He carried from the bosom of His Eternal Father. Among these revealed truths is the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, because in saying in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father," the word "Father" implies the "Son" and the "Holy Ghost" and reveals to us the first of our mysteries: One God in three divine persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Firstly, what must we believe in reference to the Holy Trinity ?

We must believe that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are but one and the same God, having but one and the same divine nature from eternity. I rest my belief upon the Holy Scriptures, for Our Lord in St. John says : " He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also." (John xiv.—9.) And when He sent His Apostles into the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, He said : " Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii.—19.) St. John, inspired by heaven, says : " And there are three who give testimony in heaven : the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One." (I. John v.—7.)

I rest my belief in this adorable mystery of the Holy Trinity not only upon the Holy Scriptures, but upon the Faith of the first Christians, upon the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, upon the teachings of the popes and of the Catholic Church, which has always preserved with jealous care, in spite of the attempts of heresiarchs to deprive her of it. Moreover, I say that this dogma is not contrary to reason. A man possesses wisdom. By wisdom we understand genius, memory, intelligence. Do we recognize or acknowledge several wisdoms in the same man ? If, then, a person possesses three faculties in the one attribute—wisdom

—we cannot consistently hesitate and deny that three persons can exist in the essence of the Godhead.

Again, we must believe that the Three Divine Persons are equal in all things, so that the Father is not before the Son, nor the Son before the Holy Ghost. The Father is all-powerful, eternal, infinitely wise, holy and perfect, as the Son and the Holy Ghost are infinitely wise, holy and perfect. Though equal, the persons are distinct. It is not the Father, but His only-begotten Son Who, without breaking the union with the divinity, was conceived and made man in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Patrick, the illustrious Apostle of Ireland, in preaching this divine mystery to the pagan Irish, used the shamrock, three leaves upon one stem, to give them an idea of its being. And in the example which I have given you concerning the powers of the soul, genius, memory and intelligence, which constitute wisdom, are distinct from one another, without disunion. So is the Blessed Trinity. Thus genius discovers truths, memory keeps them, and intelligence understands them.

Secondly, what homage is due to the Three Divine Persons ?

When a person dies, we say from the prayer of the agonizing : " Depart from this world, Christain soul, in the name of the Father, Who has

created thee ; in the name of the Son, Who has redeemed thee ; in the name of the Holy Ghost, Who has sanctified thee." Why do we recite this prayer ? Are we not indebted for our creation, our redemption and sanctification to the Blessed Trinity ? Yes, it is true that the Three Divine Persons are equally perfect, that their union cannot be closer. They have but one and the same will ; but they are distinct. To God the Father we attribute omnipotence and the works which spring from it ; to the Son, Who is the wisdom of the Father, we attribute our redemption ; and to the Holy Ghost, Who is the eternal love of the Father and of the Son, we attribute sanctification. Power is the Father's attribute, wisdom is the Son's, and love is the Holy Ghost's. The arm, hand and fingers are three distinct parts, and still they are but one member of the human body. You say : " My arm has lifted this burden. This statue is the work of my hand. These flowers are the work of skilful fingers. And still all these different works are the operations of the same member of the human body.

If we attribute special works to the Blessed Trinity, we are naturally brought to consider our particular duties to each member of this divine union.

In the first place, we must have a filial and respectful fear for the Father, Who by His omnipo-

tence rules the world. "With all thy soul fear the Lord," says Ecclesiasticus. (vii.—31.)

In the second place, let us have a loving confidence in the bounty of our Blessed Saviour, Who is the eternal wisdom of the Father. "Yes, my Redeemer, in seeing Thee lying in the manger of a poor stable, receiving the adorations of the poor shepherds who represented humanity, in hearing the last words of forgiveness and mercy uttered by Thee in Thy dying moments, how can I refuse to place my love and confidence in Thee!"

Finally, let us have a tender love for the Holy Ghost, to Whom belongs the works of love. He dwells in our hearts when we are in the state of grace; in His love He inspires us with just and holy thoughts.

This is the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, which we must believe, because it is revealed upon the infallible word of God Himself. Be not astonished, my brethren, if the essence of God is full of mysteries. Are we not mysteries ourselves and surrounded by them? The blade of grass which you trample under foot is a mystery; the fruit that you eat is a mystery; the assimilation of our food is a mystery. How can it be that at this moment a small portion of the air, set in vibration by my voice, strikes your ears and conveys my ideas to you? This is really a mystery. You see that our very existence is a mystery. We cannot ade-

quately explain the various phenomena which surround us and with which we are familiar. Therefore, if nature presents so many mysteries, be not surprised that Divine Faith is as exacting. To understand God here below is impossible. Heaven is not earth, and to understand God is to see Him face to face ; to understand God is not only to love Him, but to become immersed in His ocean of delights, in the perfections of the Blessed Trinity, to Whom praise shall ever be. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

KNOWLEDGE AND IMMENSITY OF GOD.

I am God Almighty. (Gen. xxxv.—11.)

The word "almighty," dear brethren, expresses in itself all the attributes or perfections of the Divine Majesty. Thus creation shows forth His power; the incarnation, His mercy; everlasting life, His justice,—in fact all are comprehended in the term "almighty."

This morning I will ask you to consider with me two attributes—two perfections of the infinite God. First, His knowledge; second, His immensity, which makes Him present everywhere

His knowledge. One of the first questions asked at Sunday school is the following: "Does God know all things?" Of course, brethren, you know the answer given by the child. "Yes, God knows all things, and nothing is hidden from Him." Modern science boasts justly of its many marvelous advances in the domains of the unknown, and still when we consider its glorious achievements,

what are they compared to the knowledge of God. See the dew-drop hanging from the bough of a tree, glistening in the sun—a true image of the Christian soul illuminated by the rays of Faith ; and then see the drop of water, a little larger, less pure, less limpid, which falls from the roofs of the houses—a true image of these philosophers whose pride leads to uphold so many conflicting claims and vagaries. But no matter how large these two drops of water are, what are they compared to the waves of the ocean ? They fitly represent what human science is, compared to the boundless knowledge of God.

Kepler, after 40 years of arduous labors and researches, exclaimed on discovering one of these laws which have made his name famous : "I would not exchange my happiness for the fairest kingdom." "Well, illustrious astronomer, tell me, dost thou know the magnitude of these celestial spheres which revolve so majestically in the heavens ? Dost thou know their composition and if they be inhabited ? Penetrate still further the immense recesses of stellar space, and what dost thou behold ?" Brethren, the learned astronomer remains mute. He knows not. Kepler has become famous by discovering one of the laws which regulate the revolutions of the planets, but there the limits of his science is reached.

Truly, science is like a blind man groping in the

dark. Modern science has analyzed nature and her laws, dissected men and animals, studied the structure of plants, and even if man were to retain in his memory all the data of science, what is he in comparison to that infinite mind which conceived and planned the gigantic wonders of creation ? Indeed, man is little and God alone is great ! That very science which rears its head aloft and proclaims its power cannot tell us how the spider spins its web, how the different cosmic forces are so beautifully arranged as to give the rose her blushing beauty and the lily its dazzling whiteness. Our knowledge is limited. God has placed a barrier to the human intellect. We may truthfully say that our career here below is a progressive one, that on account of our finite faculties we shall always be able to learn more and more every day ; but to the first cause—God—we can but render homage and adore His sacred intelligence and science. Everything is plain to Him. He knows why the wind blows, why the rose is red or white, and the violet purple. He knows everything, even our most secret thoughts. Our hearts are like open books in His sight. He beholds the evils which lurk in our bosoms, our impure inclinations, our hypocrisy which, alas ! so often profanes His most sacred mysteries. He knows everything, because He is the God of infinite knowledge. Let us then keep our souls and con-

sciences in such a state, so that we may not blush in His divine presence.

His immensity. For God fills all space with His immensity. How can I give you an idea of the immensity of God? Let us suppose that at the beginning of the world, God said to the swift and graceful swallow: "Go to the end of My immensity, take wings and quicken thy flight, or rather make it a thousand times swifter; fly thousands of miles a second, and when thou wilt reach the end of My immensity, where I cease to be present, thou shalt come back." Thousands of years have elapsed since then, brethren, but the swallow has never returned and shall never return. Why? Because it can never reach the end of God's immensity.

Now, sometimes we hear this silly objection: "If God is everywhere, sees all things and judges all our actions, He has much to do and must be tired." The sun which lights the whole world, forests, dales, rivers and valleys, men and animals, should be tired also. If not—if the sun, which is only a creature of God, can without fatigue light the world and the whole planetary system, with greater reason can God, the Supreme Creator, by a simple act of His will, be present everywhere and order all events.

But how is God everywhere? God is everywhere by His essence; He is entirely here and there

without moving, like the spirits. He does not displace bodies to penetrate their inmost being. Place a piece of iron in an intense fire ; the heat penetrates and reddens it, but still does not displace it. Light passes through glass without breaking it ; still these material agents are less powerful than spirits. God, the Supreme Spirit, penetrates everything without displacing it.

Then, dear brethren, the presence of God, which we cannot escape, must compel us to walk circumspectly in His sight. God sees me ! He is here ! What courage and strength this thought will give you to combat temptation and avoid the occasion of sin ! " Commit sin," said the chaste Susanna to the two wicked old men who were inflamed with lust toward her, " no, never ! I know you will accuse me wrongly before the people, but it is better for me to fall into your hands than to sin in the sight of the Lord." (Dan. xiii.—23.) God rewarded the chaste woman's reverence for His presence in raising up Daniel to defend her against her accusers. (Dan. xiii.—45.) Dear brethren, if the immensity of God is infinite, His justice and holiness are likewise infinite. Consequently, being holy, He dislikes evil ; being just, He must punish it. The justice of God cannot place on the same footing vice and virtue; it cannot give to the traitor, Judas, who died in despair, the same reward as to Peter, the prince of the Apostles, who suffered

martyrdom in defence of the Faith. Therefore, brethren, if there be anyone in your midst who has lived in a state of sin, I would say to him: "Arise, thou that sleepeth, and walk henceforth in the sight of the Lord, for His science and immensity are infinite. Be reconciled to the Heavenly Father, persevere in the path of virtue, and merit one day everlasting happiness in the mansions of eternity." Amen.

SERMON XV.

OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

I am the Almighty God : walk before me, and be perfect. (Gen. xvii.—1.)

God is almighty, dear brethren, and He is often called by that name in the Holy Scriptures. "I am Almighty God," says He to Abraham ; " walk before me, and be perfect." (Gen. xvii.—1.) The Blessed Virgin, in her sublime praise of God, paid a special tribute to the power of the Creator when she exclaimed : " He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name." (Luke i.—49.) The almighty power of God is independent, infinite, indefatigable in all its manifestations.

I will point out to you this morning three essentials of this awe-inspiring attribute of the Creator.

The power of God is *independent,* for God is the King of kings, Lord of lords, depending on no one and needing no one's assistance. "He alone is all-powerful," says St. Paul. (Tim. vi.—15.) He is sufficient to Himself.

The almighty power is also *infinite;* to say and to do, to will and to make, are the same to God. In God the will and the power are equal, and are especially shown us in the creation of the universe out of nothing. Neither men nor angels can make anything out of nothing. The combined forces of all created beings, angels and men, could not create the smallest insect which pursues its ephemeral career in the bright sunshine.

To build this church in which we are assembled, how many things have been necessary! First of all, an architect, who conceived and drew up the plans and specifications ; the various artisans and laborers ; then the materials. The gradual raising of the structure, with its lofty columns and majestic proportions, all were the result of patient labor and tried skill. How much time, how many days, how many months, even years, were necessary to complete this beautiful structure in which we worship God ! But the Almighty, when he determined to create our universe, did not require strong foundations to lay the basis of the earth, of the sun, or the other celestial bodies which revolve in the heavens. No, His almighty hand has thrown them throughout space, where they rest in obedience to His power. He had not to seek for materials to build our world. He simply said : "Let the world be," and immediately it sprang from nothing as from an inexhaustible source. Workmen ! Indeed,

there was only one—His supreme will. And if God, to teach a lesson, or for some unknown and mysterious cause, created the different beings of the earth in six days, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, Holy Faith tells us that His almighty power could create them in the twinkling of an eye.

Allow me, dear brethren, to make use of another comparison to illustrate the infinite power of God. When we behold our railroad trains travelling sixty miles an hour, pulling huge cars over the steel rails with such a rapidity, we are astonished at the mechanical genius of man, and justly so. God in creating man has given him a spark of His own divine intelligence. But what is the power of man, compared to God? What are the admirable inventions of our age and of succeeding ages, compared to the least of God's works? Nothing; they fade into absolute insignificance when contrasted. If you consider the revolution of our earth around the sun—this gigantic ball whirling in space, not at the rate of 60 miles an hour, but at the inconceivable one of 60,000—you will form an idea of the power of God manifested in the sublime wonders of creation. The earth in her revolutions has never deviated the one-millionth part of a second from the orbit traced out for her by the finger of God. O God! how little are we in Thy presence! Alone thou art sovereign, alone thou art great,

eternal, immense—King of kings and Lord of lords! I adore thee in thy almighty and incomprehensible power!

The almighty power of God is *indefatigable*, by virtue of the Divine Will. The eye of man grows tired of seeing, the ear of man from hearing; but the will of God is never tired. But, brethren, although the power of God is independent, infinite and indefatigable, there are things which are impossible to it, because they are opposed to His infinite perfections. Thus God cannot lie, because it would be contrary to His truthfulness; God cannot sin, because it would clash with His holiness; God cannot die, because He is eternal. In other words, everything that implies a defect or an imperfection cannot exist in God, the Supreme Perfection. God cannot be guilty of any of the defects repugnant to His essence. St. Thomas remarks that God, being all-powerful, cannot sin, because it is a weakness. God cannot make a square circle, because He cannot change the essence of things. The very moment a thing loses its essence it ceases to be, as a circle would no longer be a circle if it became a square.

In concluding, brethren, this reflection comes to me: Why have the Apostles, in the Creed which bears their name, selected from among the many perfections of the God-head this one—"Almighty"? Why have they said: "I believe in

God, the Father Almighty," instead of saying, "I believe in God, perfect spirit, all-powerful, immense, eternal, just, holy, merciful, beautiful, and omniscient ?"

I find two reasons.

In the first place, in uniting under the one title "Almighty" all the perfections of God, the Apostles wanted us to believe all the sacred truths which Holy Faith teaches. God is almighty, therefore He could create the world out of nothing ; God is almighty, therefore He could accomplish the adorable mystery of the Incarnation, by which the Son of God became man ; God is almighty, therefore He could cause the Blessed Virgin to become a mother without ceasing to be a virgin. God is almighty, therefore He could institute the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, in which He resides to show His love for us.

In the second place, the Apostles named this divine perfection of God to teach us that He is our Sovereign Master, and consequently that we must submit our will to Him and keep His commandments ; that He is almighty to reward those who keep His law and to punish those who transgress it. My dear brethren, in which camp will you cast your lot ? Will you identify yourselves with those who are faithful to God, or with those who despise His commandments ? Do not hesitate to choose the right camp. Enroll yourselves under the

banner of Jesus Christ, fight manfully in His sacred service, and at death receive the reward promised to the good and faithful servant. (Matt. xxv.—21, 23.) Amen,

SERMON XVI.

ETERNITY AND BOUNTY OF GOD.

Alone the Lord God is eternal. (II. Mac. i.—25.)
Praise ye the Lord, for He is good. (Ps. cxxxiv.—3.)

I will develop this morning, brethren, two divine perfections very consoling indeed to the heart of man; namely, the eternity and the bounty of God.

The eternity of God! How can I represent it to you? God had no beginning—always was and shall ever be, as we learn from the catechism. Have we ever tried to understand the import of these words, "God is eternal"?

Thousands of worlds have existed long, perhaps, before the creation of our globe. God was there to create them and destroy them, when their sphere of usefulness had passed. Thousands of worlds may follow the present one, and God will be there, all-powerful witness of their exisence and of their destruction. How little are we before eternity! Have you ever noticed, brethren, those little bubbles of air which arise from the water when a rain storm occurs? After an instant's

duration they burst and disappear. Shorter is our life, if we compare it to the eternity of God. Picture to yourselves the immutable and omnipotent Creator seated upon the throne of His eternity, while at His feet flows the river of Time. We human beings, like the autumnal leaves carried down upon the breast of the foaming river, fall into this grand and ceaseless flow of water, and are carried away by its mighty tide towards eternity.

God, from His throne, beholds us passing on the river. To-day it was a dear father or mother, a friend in whose confidence you have reposed your most secret thoughts. To-morrow it may be one of ourselves. And while generations are feeling the power of the irresistible torrent, and pass within the shadow of the great throne, there upon it God stands forever. How little are we before Eternity!

And all are equal before it. There is no earthly distinction in the sight of God. Comparable to the leaves of autumn, large or small are carried off on the stream; so, likewise, the philosopher, the emperor, the poor and the rich, the child and hoary old man, are subjected to the immutable degree of death and dissolution. Behold the illustrious men, the renowned warriors and celebrated statesmen, whose fame rings throughout the world, all—all carried away on the stream of Time. Behold, Alexander the Great, the hero of a hun-

dred battles, the conqueror of twenty provinces, carried away in the hour of triumph—a victim of that law which carried away the most servile of his slaves. Behold Cæsar, whose very name was synonymous for power, fame, glory, stricken down by his rivals and carried away also on the stream toward eternity. Behold the greatest military genius of modern times—a man at the mention of whose name Europe trembled—Napoleon—dying in exile on the barren isle of St. Helena, and learn in the great lesson that man is nothing compared to the eternity of God. Indeed, all are dead leaves passing on the stream of life, while God remains forever on the throne of His eternity. Yes, brethren, God alone is eternal, and who shall ever understand the unspeakable depths of His divine eternity? (Rom. xi.—33.)

Now let us consider the most consoling attribute of God ; namely, His *goodness*.

You know, dear brethren, that after long days of drought and distress, when the sun has bent down his fiery beams upon the bleached and parched earth, that the face of nature becomes changed. The trees lose their freshness, the flowers their brilliant colors. All nature presents a gloomy, sickly aspect. But what a change takes place when the clouds collect together and the refreshing rain falls upon the earth ! Everything resumes its grandeur. Nature smiles again in her

sweetest garb, the songsters of the groves chant their most harmonious melodies. Brethren, this beauty, this re-awakening, this marvelous change in nature is due to the rain. "Infinite Bounty of my God, thou art the dew of heaven which falls upon our hearts, so cold, so insensible to Thy divine influences. We owe everything that we possess to Thee." All the gifts of nature and of grace come from this inexhaustible source of our well-being—the goodness of God.

Nothing is good in the material creation which is not a manifestation of that essential bounty which the divine nature holds and possesses in all its perfection and infinity. But let us leave this material creation upon which God has not conferred higher and nobler gifts, and contemplate the intellectual and rational order, and see what a pleasing vista is opened before our eyes. Justly we admire the devotedness of the father or of the mother who toil all day for their little ones; still this is only an emanation of the bounty of God, a breaking forth of the divine love; justly we admire the beautiful lives of a St. Vincent of Paul, a St. Elizabeth of Hungary, devoting their lives to raising the weak, the fallen, the abandoned, and succoring the most wretched of our common race, but their goodness was a gift bestowed upon them by a God infinitely good. They are indeed good, these angels who praise the Creator and sing His

praises : " Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts ; " (Is. vi.—3) he is good, our guardian angel, who watches so tenderly over us in the various vicissitudes of life ; Mary, our Blessed Mother, is good, for she has given us redemption in the person of her Son. Well, dear brethren, if we put together all the goodness of angels and men, of every created being, what is it, compared to the goodness of God ? A grain of sand to a high mountain, a drop of water to the ocean.

Brethren, this bounty of God calls us creatures of a day to share the happiness of eternity. Looking with pity upon poor sinners, God has sent His only-begotten Son to redeem them. What marvelous goodness is shown in the sublime tragedy of Calvary ! What a tremendous proof of the love and goodness of the Eternal for the human race ! Let us profit by the goodness of such a God, and try to secure the everlasting bliss of heaven, to which we are entitled through the merits of Him Who left His heavenly throne, assumed our weak and infirm nature, so that we could have an expiation of exceeding value for our sins, (I. John iv.—10) and a continual propitiation before the throne of Justice. Let us remember that God alone is eternal, and that we must give praise to Him, for, in the words of the Scripture, " He is good." (Ps. cxxxiv.—3.) Amen.

SERMON XVII.

GOD IS JUST, HOLY, MERCIFUL AND OF INFINITE BEAUTY.

O Lord God, Thou art just, merciful, gracious (II. Mac. i.—25, 26) *and holy.* (Lev. xi.—44.)

We read in the catechism taught at Sunday school that God is just, holy and merciful. I also add that He is a Being of infinite beauty. I will develop briefly these four attributes of the Almighty.

The justice of God has three qualities which should strike terror into our hearts when we consider them : It is searching, equitable and inflexible.

Searching. The air which fills this church seems pure to us ; but if the sun, by the splendor of his rays, were shining through one of the windows, he would reveal to us thousands of motes of dust floating in his beams. We may imagine that our consciences are pure, holy, innocent, but the justice of God in its divine light can detect what escapes the eyes of men. It lights up and discovers

the most hidden recesses of hearts. Sometimes we see an apple tree richer in its fruit-yielding than another. Its fruit presents a ripe and pleasing aspect, but on the inside it is rotten and full of decay. We find men who are good exteriorly, who never curse, swear or steal ; but God, who reads their hearts, sees their corruption. He sees them full of themselves, carried away by earthly cares and affections.

The justice of God is equitable. It is meted out by two hands—one to reward, the other to punish. Even in this world, where justice is often one-sided, a judge will fine one man a dollar where in another circumstance he would inflict a fine of ten, because the offence is greater. A man who dies with the guilt of five mortal sins will be more heavily punished than a man guilty of one. "According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be." (Deut. xxv.—2.)

But the justice of God is also inflexible. It strikes the rich as well as the poor. No influence can stop it, when the sentence has been uttered. Lucifer was the chief of the angels, Judas an apostle, Origen the son of a martyr and a defender of the Faith. Henry VIII. was once termed the "Defender of Sacramental glories" ; Luther himself was an Augustinian monk ; but the justice of God, like the waves of the ocean, like a clap of thunder, takes its effect upon everything without

mercy, for mercy belongs to this world, justice to the next.

God is holy. Among all the perfections of God, none is so admired and adored in heaven as the sanctity of God. The angelic choirs cry aloud unceasingly: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts." (Is. vi.—3.) This beautiful function shall be the reward of the sanctified souls. The Prophet David says: "Thy saints shall announce eternally the glory of Thy sanctity and the splendor of Thy glory." (Ps. cxliv.—5.)

God is also a spirit of infinite beauty. He is the infinite source of all grace, harmony, order, perfection, human and divine. His beauty is so far above all our thoughts or the promptings of our imaginations that, here below, we can never form an adequate idea of His surpassing beauty. The beauty of God is so infinitely sublime in its splendid aspect that Himself takes a pleasure in admiring it. "Praise and beauty are before Him: holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary," sings the Psalmist. (xcv.—6.)

But let us come, brethren, to the most consoling of God's attributes—*His mercy.* In many passages of the Holy Scriptures our Blessed Lord speaks with pleasure of His mercy and love toward sinners. "What man of you hath a hundred sheep," says He, "and if he lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after

that which was lost until he find it ? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing : and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them : Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost ? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just that need not penance." (Luke xv.—4 & fol.) And as the love of a father is more ardent and affectionate, He compares Himself to one who had two sons. " The younger of them, led by the folly of his ways, said to his father : Father, give me the portion of the substance that falleth to me. And the father divided unto them his substance. The young man went abroad then into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. And after he had spent all, there came a famine over the land, and he began to be in want. And he went, and cleaved to one of the citizens, who sent him to his farm to feed swine. The poor young man would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat : and no one gave him. Returning to himself, he said : How many hired servants abound in my father's house with plenty, and I here perish with hunger ! Rising, he came to his father. When he was a great way off, his father, who was oftentimes watching the road where his beloved son had disappeared years before, saw him return-

ing, and being moved with compassion toward him, running, fell upon his neck and embraced him. Bring forth quickly, said the father to his servants, the first robe, put it on him, put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Bring forth the fatted calf, kill it ; let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead and is come to life again ; he was lost and he is found. And they began to be merry." (Luke xv.—11 & fol.)

Yes, brethren, God is merciful, and His mercy led Him to give to the world His only-begotten Son for its salvation. If our souls then are terrified by the inexorable justice of God, let us not forget His divine mercy. Let us consider the august sacrifice of Calvary. Christ dying, atoning for our sins, is our hope and our refuge. " He shed His precious blood to the last drop, He died thirsting for our salvation." (John xix.—28.) This thirst was far greater than the one which parched His divine lips from loss of blood.

Brethren, let us thirst after the love of God, let us thirst after the possession of heavenly treasures, for, " Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after the kingdom of God and His justice, for they shall have their fill." (Matt. v.—6.) May this divine yearning lead us to the Lord's feet, so that we may sing His mercies forever, as they are above all His works. (Ps. lxxxviii.—2.) Amen.

SECOND PART OF THE CREED.

GOD : CREATOR.

First Article.—*Continuation.*

I believe in God, Creator of Heaven and earth

SERMON XVIII.

THE CREATION.

I made the earth, I created man upon it and I stretched forth the heavens. (Is. xlv.—12.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Moses thus relates the history of the creation: "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. But the earth was void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. God said: 'Let there be light, and the light was made.' The Creator then divided the light from the darkness; it was the work of the first day. On the second day He made the firmament, that is to say, that whole space between the earth and the highest stars, the space in which the worlds move and in which we breathe. Then He divided the waters which were to remain on earth from those that were to form the clouds. On the third day, God said: 'Let the waters of the earth be gathered together into certain places, forming thus the rivers, the streams and the oceans, and let the dry land appear.' But that land was bare, void and empty. Again resounded

the creative voice: 'Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which may have seed in itself upon the earth.' On the fourth day, God created the sun, the moon and the stars; but no living being yet existed. The creation of the fishes and of the fowls was the work of the fifth day. Finally, on the sixth day, God created all the beasts according to their kinds, and cattle and everything that creepeth upon the earth after its kind. God crowned the preparatory works of the six days by creating man to His image and likeness." (Gen. i.) In creating the world, God raised a palace of exquisite workmanship for man alone—the king of creation—who was to resemble material creation in his body, but in his spiritual soul, the Creator.

Let us see, brethren, how everything is regulated to suit this king of creation.

Consider, for instance, what wisdom the Divine Architect has displayed in separating the land from the water. If it were too soft, men could not live upon its surface; and if too dense or too hard, it would be impossible to cultivate it. Divine Wisdom has adjusted things so that all will serve man's interests. Even the conformations of the earth will be suitable to his employments. The undulating vales, sheltered from the winds by the neighboring mountains, will produce the harvests;

the rising hills, exposed all day to the rays of the sun, will be a fitting place for the vine ; the mountains raising their lofty heads, covered with forests, will give the stone, the marble, the wood and what is necessary to build a home. All—all indeed will serve the ends of man. The oceans separating the continents, the rivers running through them, keeping freshness and life, will develop industry and commerce, as the veins in our bodies carry in them blood, health and life.

Over the surface of the globe God has erected a truly magnificent dome. There the sun presides in regal splendor, diffusing his life-giving rays over the worlds which follow in his train, and casting, for men's benefit, his light in the immense fields of space. The silvery moon rules the night and throws her pale beams over hill and dale, woodland and forest, weaving a fairy spell in the sheen of her splendor. She is an image of our Blessed Lady, of whom the Scriptures say : "She is as beautiful as the moon." (Cant. vi.—9.) The myriad stars enlighten the monotony of the night and shed their twinkling rays upon the sombre earth. Magnificent indeed is the beautiful arch that covers the palace of the Universe, which God created for His beloved creature.

But this palace of the earth, with its oceans and rivers, its accidental surface, its starry dome, has no ornament yet, and God will adorn it : "Let the

earth bring forth the green herb," He says, "and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which may have seed in itself upon the earth." (Gen. i.—11.) And it was so done. All at once the earth is covered with verdure; the trees spring up, casting their umbrageous branches over the fields; the flowers display, in their diversified hues, their exhilarating beauty. The creeping vine and the waving wheat appear also on that day, future symbols of that sacrament of love in which the Son of God conceals the splendors of His divinity. Fishes fill the watery element, supplying man with food and a resource to his industry; insects enliven the forests, birds chant their morning hymns of joy and praise, animals of every kind crowd the earth and become the helpers or the feeders of the king of creation.

St. Francis of Assisi, in beholding the exquisite magnificence displayed by the Creator in building up the palace of the Universe exclusively for the use of men, could not withhold his sentiments of joy, and fell into an ecstasy. Adoration and love pervaded his whole being. "Brothers," he would exclaim to those around him, "see how God is good; see the care and liberality with which He gives us the harvests and feeds everything." Then, raising his eyes to heaven, he would invite, like the prophet, all creation to adore and thank God for His munificence. "Sparrows, my sisters, bless the

Creator, Who has given ye wings so swift ; lambs, my brothers, thank the Creator, Who has covered ye with so warm and thick a fleece."

And we, brethren, for whom the Creator has erected this palace of the Universe, of ravishing beauty, shall we remain indifferent to such bounty and love ? Let our hearts overflow in love, adoration, praise, thanksgiving and respect ; let our lives show forth that we are truly children of the heavenly and merciful Father, Who made the earth, stretched forth the heavens and created man to serve Him here below and to be happy with Him hereafter.

Amen.

SERMON XIX.

THE END OF CREATION.

The works of God show forth His glory. (Ps. xviii.)

The wisdom of God, dear brethren, who freely and from all eternity had determined to create, demanded an aim worthy of that divine perfection.

Therefore God's aim in the creation was two-fold: First, to glorify Himself, by manifesting His almighty power, His wisdom and His bounty; the second, to proclaim His glory in His creatures, whether animate or inanimate, in order that they might declare His perfections.

1. God has glorified Himself in the creation, because it is an act alone worthy of an infinite power. If a skilful workman could make a gold chalice out of a silver ingot, he would be admired; if he were to make the gold chalice out of a piece of lead, he would still be more admired; but should he make the gold chalice out of sand, would he not be considered a demi-God?—because his power would appear almost boundless. Well,

brethren, would He not be looked upon as a God possessing infinite power, the One Who has made angels and men and the whole universe out of nothing, called it into being by a simple word—an act of His all-powerful will ?

God's wisdom is shown forth in the order and harmony which reign in the universe. Not to speak of the regularity in the movements of the celestial bodies, which are justly styled " monster clocks " wound up by God ; in considering only the earth with its diverse creatures, from the ephemeral butterfly to the mighty elephant, from the laborious ant to the busy bee,—all these creatures so opposed to each other, whose ends in created life are so different, are put together to serve our wishes. The fire and water, so antithetic to each another, are united to cook our food—the atmosphere and the earth act reciprocally for the welfare of man.

If, brethren, when passing a rifle-range, you see several bullets hitting the bull's-eye, you say there must be some one aiming at it. And you would be right. Well, when you see everything so well arranged and ordered and so many different creatures led to the same end, that is to say, to the service of man and the glory of God, you must recognize the wisdom of a sovereign and admirable Creator directing everything in the world.

God's aim in the creation was also to show forth

His bounty. He had no personal interest in it, because He is infinite happiness in Himself. He created through love and bounty. It is for you men, for you alone, that the heavens move, that the stars shine, that the fire warms, the air refreshes, that the rivers flow, that the earth yields her fruits. All creation's grandeurs are made for your contemplation and pleasure. God's bounty is always exercised toward you. Even when you are in sin, He loves you, He thinks of you, He serves you in His creatures. His glories are proclaimed by His creatures, which are so many voices speaking of His greatness: "The heavens proclaim the glory of God, and the firmament reveals His works," (Ps. xviii.—2) sings the Psalmist.

2. It was God's aim to be manifested by the works of creation. But although manifested, He was not known and served by this inanimate creation. Therefore He determined to create man. It is for this reason, according to the teachings of the Church, that at the beginning of time, God created the spiritual and corporal natures, that is to say, the angelical and the material worlds. Strictly speaking, these two worlds would have been sufficient, but He thought that the distance which separated them was too great, too vast; so the harmony of the divine plan required a middle world which would serve as a connective between the other two. So in human nature we have this

connection, resembling the angelic nature in its intelligence and soul and also the material in its body. In man, therefore, we have the meeting of the angelic and material worlds. Man centres in himself the life of the plants, the sensation of the animals, and a degree of intelligence, a spark of heaven-born nature, common alike to God and the angels.

I will say more ; the material creation needed a pontiff and a king. Man, who belongs to the material world by his body and to the spiritual by his soul, is that pontiff who carries to God the stream of material creation, with his own adorations. Here we find the reasons for creation or the end of it. In the Incarnation of the Son of God, we have the deification of our nature. He is our high priest and intercessor. In Him are united in a supreme degree the spiritual and temporal relations of things, and finally all these worlds are united to God by the sacred and impassible bonds of the hypostatic union, and these bonds are stronger than time, stronger than death, for they are as strong as eternity.

Oh, let us, brethren, aspire with all the might of our being toward that infinite God who has created things to glorify Himself and show forth His glory, and who has created man expressly to know, love and serve Him here below, and to work out his salvation in fear and trembling. Let us aspire

toward that infinite God who alone can satisfy the cravings of our hearts and souls after everlasting happiness, for in the language of St. Augustine: "O God! thou hast created us for Thyself, and our hearts cannot rest unless they rest in Thee."

Amen.

SERMON XX.

THE BEAUTIES OF CREATION.

All the earth is full of Thy glory. (Is. vi.—3.)

Before entering into details, brethren, let our souls gaze upon the works of the Divine Creator, so that having admired them our hearts may be full to overflowing with feelings of joy and gratitude toward Him Who is their author. To be the everyday witness of the admirable spectacle which the earth offers us, prevents us from understanding and feeling the beauty of the works of creation.

Fancy to yourselves a man blind from his birth; for instance, that blind man mentioned in the Gospel, cured by Our Lord. Poor young man! he had reached the prime of life and still had never seen the splendors and beauties of nature. Vainly had the sun risen, casting his golden rays over hill and vale, mountain, stream and river; vainly had the brilliant stars cast their mild rays, tempering the darkness of the night, and revolving in their gigantic orbits with unerring precision; vainly the vernal beauties of spring had decked the

fields, the trees displayed their green foliage, their branches loaded with luscious fruits bending to earth ; the grandeur of God's creation was hidden from that poor man. But, lo ! Jesus comes along : " Be thou opened," (John ix.—1) were the words of the Master addressed to him, and suddenly scales fell from his eyes and a view of inexpressible beauty stood revealed before him. Can you understand this man's emotion and the tear of joy which fell from these eyes once bereft of vision ? Gazing on the skies, he recognizes that brilliant sun of which he heard so much and whose light shines so resplendently upon all the objects which surround him. Here is the earth, so rich and beautiful—how gorgeous are its flowers and how lovely are its fruits ! Over there are the birds whose sweet melodies he heard, and the poor blind man, overwhelmed by the sights that greet him, throws himself at Jesus' feet and in a transport of gratitude pours forth the admiration of his heart and bows to proclaim the divinity of the Healer.

Brethren, would not our feelings be similar to those of the blind man of the Gospel, if we were placed in a similar position and rescued from its night of darkness ? We have only to look around us and see the splendor and beauty of the works of God—speaking not of these thousands of celestial bodies which adorn the celestial sphere ; neither of man, with all his perfect physical organization, so

far above the animals, nor of the animals serving man—but considering solely the earth which we trample under foot. At first sight, how vile it looks! And yet from the colorless and dull clay springs the virgin lily of the fields, the blushing rose, the modest violet and the thousands of sweet incense-bearing flowers. Indeed, a skilful artist may paint their different shades, but he can never reproduce their delicious fragrance. Again, the earth supports men and animals; it yields the wheat from which our daily bread is made; it yields the iron and steel which play an important part in our mechanical progress. The oceans and rivers teem with innumerable fish, all serving the needs of many; the streams fertilizing the valleys, and the gigantic rivers serving for the commercial prosperity of nations. And all this, since the beginning of the world, has gone on with unfailing regularity. How beautiful are the works of the Creator! What return can we offer for His benefits? (Ps. cxv.—12.)

Brethren, praise Him, thank Him, and adore Him with humility.

What is to praise God, if not to recognize the infinite wisdom which has presided over all His works? Your child has been wise and attentive, he has faithfully performed his work at school, his teacher will praise him. Your child learns his catechism well and is a regular attendant at Sunday

school, I praise him—I recognize his merits. To praise God then is to recognize His adorable perfections, His admirable wisdom.

But we must also thank God, and nevet forget it is solely for man's sake that He has given to nature and to all His creatures so much splendor and beauty. Brethren, if you would be thankful to a friend who on your birthday presents you with a beautiful gift, would you be insensible towards the Almighty God who for yourselves alone, to rejoice your hearts and charm your minds, has made nature so fair. A poor man will bless and thank the hand that relieves his necessities; brethren, must we not thank God for the bread and clothing which we receive from His bounty ? Certainly, brethren, otherwise we would be ungrateful.

The works of God invite us to adore Him. They say that Canute the Second, King of the Danes, who conquered England, when at the zenith of his greatness, could not stand the vile flatteries of his courtiers, who called him " King of kings," " Lord of the sea." One day the king, sitting at the seashore, ordered the coming tide not to wet his feet. The waves were deaf to his command ; they rose higher and at last seemed ready to carry him away in their raging fury. Then turning to his courtiers, the king said : " Learn that before God all are weak. He alone presides over the oceans, He alone can say to it : ' Here thou shalt go and no

farther ; He alone is King of the ocean and Master of life.' "

Let us then, brethren, pay our adoration to God, Whose wisdom and power are shown us in the marvels of creation's works. Let us, with that traveller who, in the month of June, had risen before the sun, and wending his way over the dewy fields, was gazing upon the approaching sun-rise. Struck by the beautiful scenery, his heart was filled with admiration ; he listened to the rustling of the harvest flies, to the warbling of the birds chanting their morning hymns of praise, and looking down he espied a little flower opening its petals and reflecting the rays of the rising sun; he leans over to examine it and sees a little insect creeping along the stem of the plant drinking the morning dew. Carried away with the thrilling grandeurs of the scene, he exclaimed : " O God of my soul, how beautiful are the works of Thy hand ! In great things as well as in the small, Thou alone art great and admirable ! "

Animated, dear brethren, with the pious sentiments of this traveller, let us bend before God's infinite beauty and magnificence ; let us praise, thank and adore Him in all His sublime works ; let us say with the prophet : " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within thee praise His holy name, (Ps. cii.—1) for the earth is full of His glory." (Is. vi.—3.) Amen.

SERMON XXI.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Thy Providence, O Father, governeth the world. (Wisdom xiv.—3.)

The Providence of God, brethren, is the sequence of His Almighty power, making but one with all His divine perfections.

I intend to prove, in the first place, the absurdity and impiety of not recognizing a Divine Providence which governs all things, and in the second place, to produce evidences of a Divine Providence guiding the world and taking care of it.

1. "If you say I was never born," says Plutarch, "you tell a lie—you do me a wrong; but you do me a greater wrong if you say that I was born, but that I have been wicked, cruel, vicious and neglectful of my family." If you say, brethren, there is no God, you tell a lie, and you try to harm Him; but you try to do Him a greater harm still if, acknowledging His existence, you dare say that He neglects His work, that He is cruel toward His creatures, and that having created the world, He

does not take care of it and leaves its government to chance or fortune.

Do not say, brethren, that God will be lowering Himself in ruling this miserable world of ours. History relates that Alexander the Great, at the age of 33, having conquered a great number of provinces, sighed and said : "What shall I do with myself when I will have conquered the whole world?" Cæsar remarked upon these words, which were repeated to him : "I am astonished that Alexander has not considered that there is just as much work and honor to govern wisely and rule a state as to conquer and form it." Can we not, dear brethren, apply these words to our subject ? Is it less glorious, less admirable and worthy of God to govern the whole world by a wise Providence than to have drawn it out of nothing by His infinite power ? The contrary would be a gross error, which Aristotle says, is against common sense and reason. Our universe, which came from nothing, which was created by the Almighty power of God, cannot but be directed by the providence of a God.

Behold men watching with jealous care the concerns of this world and directing its progress ; see them running our railway cars. Well, very often, in spite of their prudence, accidents occur. How many unfortunate travellers have been their victime. Engines collide, cars are telescoped. Even

on the immensity of the ocean terrible accidents happen, and many have found a grave in its waves, heart-broken families being denied the consolation of bestowing upon their members the last offices of charity and sepulture. And after this you are going to tell me, brethren, that the multitude of celestial bodies which revolve so rapidly in space, that our fair sister-planet the moon, whose movements are so intricate, do not obey some superior laws, that no engineer has presided over their advances, that no pilot has steered them in their onward march through ethereal space. It would indeed be ridiculous to accept such a theory, and you and I believe that this engineer, this pilot, under whose direction the sun, moon and stars move in all security, is none other than the Providence of God.

2. The Providence of God not only governs, but also exercises care over its creatures.

Conservation is as miraculous as creation. Behold the monuments of European cities, marvels of beauty and exquisite workmanship! Well, these relics of a glorious past, no matter how strongly they have been built, would soon fall into ruin if they were not cared for. The ravages of time would soon destroy them. Who takes care, preserves, and repairs what the almighty power has created? See the transition of the seasons showing us the marvels of nature recuperating herself

and displaying her usual grandeurs and magnificence. Trees, flowers, and fruits appear at their proper season. The wonders of creation are just as brilliant to-day as ever. The stars shine with as much lustre as when they were cast into space by the almighty hand. The movements of the sun and of the moon are just as accurate and evenly balanced as ever.

Notwithstanding, some people object to the Providence of God. They say, "God demeans Himself in taking care of earthly things; that it is ridiculous to say that the hairs of our heads are all numbered, that an insect cannot perish without His permission. Now we find the answer to this objection in ourselves. Observe what happens by the power of our soul. This vital principle transforms our food into blood, flesh, bones, nerves and muscles; it feeds, in admirable proportion, all our bodily members, and still performs this duty without fatigue; and it is not unworthy of her, who has been created to the image and likeness of God. (Gen. i.—27.) What is done in the little world of our bodies is accomplished on a far grander scale in the universe by the Providence of God. The sun dries the moist earth, makes the diamond flash, shoots its rays through the lowering clouds without any detriment to itself. The light is not less pure when it dries the mud of the earth as when it passes through a precious stone. The Providence

of God is not less admirable when it feeds the worm of the earth as well as when it glorifies a member of the heavenly court.

We murmur sometimes against Providence because we do not understand it. "Were an ant, for instance" says St. Augustine, "to have the use of reason, in walking over our faces, the insect would be lead to murmur against their conformations. Why is the nose so projective, the forehead so high, the eyes set so deeply and the cheeks so low? Would it not be better that everything should be level and flat? I would not have the trouble to go up to the forehead and come down on the cheeks." The falsity of this reason is apparent to us, because we know that evidently everything has been ordered for the best and for the beauty and convenience of all. In fact, the contours and lineaments of the human face please us by their symmetry and harmony.

When we murmur against Providence we are like the ant—we display our ignorance. God sees further than we. The child does not know that the luscious grape must be crushed in the wine-press, that its juice may become life-giving wine. The Christian must tread the wine-press of sorrow, trial, tribulation and misery, so that his virtues may become truly worthy of his divine calling.

Have a great confidence in the Providence of God, dear brethren, place all your cares upon Him

Who has cared for you. Remember that everything comes from the hand of a loving Father Who desires our greatest good and that nothing harmful will come from so good and holy a source. If your life is a pilgrimage, God will be your guide ; if it is a warfare, He will be a shield; if it is a stormy sea, He will be the pilot Who will always lead you to the harbor of salvation ; for, O Father, thy Providence governeth the whole world ! Amen.

SERMON XXII.

EXISTENCE OF THE ANGELS—THEIR FUNCTIONS.

Angels are ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation. (Heb. i.—14.)

When we say in the Apostles' Creed : "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven," we mean to say that God is not only the Creator of the beautiful firmament which shows forth the work of His hand and which we sometimes call "heaven," but we mean also to say that He is the Creator of that dwelling-place of everlasting happiness where He manifests His glory and power in a more especial manner, in communicating Himself more intimately to the blessed souls and the holy angels.

My object this morning is to prove, in the first place, the existence of the angels, and in the second place, to show their occupations.

Brethren, that *there are* in the heavens created by God angels, that is to say, spirits far above

human intelligence and not united to material bodies, solely of a spiritual nature, is a truth of our divine Faith, which can be rejected only by those denying the Revelation and the ground-work of Christian Faith—the divinity of Christ. Listen to the Bible, which is the word of God Himself. An angel foretells to Abraham the birth of his son. (Gen. xviii.) The same Abraham is prevented from sacrificing Isaac by the intervention of one of these heavenly messengers. (Gen. xxii.—11.) Jacob, fleeing from his angry brother, wrestles with an angel. (Gen. xxxii.—24.) To place before you proofs with which you are more conversant, I will ask you: who announces the sublime mystery of the Incarnation to our Blessed Lady but an angel? (Luke i.—26.) Who brought the good tidings of Christ's Birth to the humble shepherds on the lone hills of Judea but these heavenly messengers? (Luke ii.—13.) Later, when persecution came, an angel appeared to Joseph in his sleep, saying: "Arise, take the Mother and the Child and fly into Egypt and remain there until I shall tell thee, for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." (Matt. ii.—13 & 20.) During the agony of Our Lord in blood-stained Gethsemani, an angel appeared to Him and comforted Him in that terrible hour of spiritual dereliction. (Luke xxii.—43.) Finally, a vision of an angel announced to the holy women the risen Christ and

His victory over sin and death. (Matt. xxviii.—5.) Yes, brethren, the angels exist. They are pure spirits created by God for His glory and services. If oftentimes they are represented under human forms, with wings, it is to represent to us the docility and promptitude with which they carry out all the commands of God.

But what are the *occupations* and *functions* of the good angels ? Confirmed in innocence and holiness, they will only what is innocent, beautiful and good. They love God with an intense love, and shall always remain united to Him with the golden bonds of charity. The beauty of their glory and the essence of their happiness is in love —yes, in the love of God and in the desire to see Him loved and served by all. We can sum up their functions to two: To praise God and to execute His orders, and such also shall be the occupations of those Christian souls who have journeyed through this weary pilgrimage and who upon the coming of the bridegroom shall be found prepared to enter into the joy of the Lord. The angels execute the orders of God—they are His messengers to men, for they are ministering spirits, sent for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation. (Heb. i.—14.) He has made them the helpers of His Divine Providence, in the care and guardianship of the world.

We read in history that Alexander the Great had

a bosom friend, called Ephistion. He allowed this well-tried and trusty friend the privilege of dressing in regal state. Some lady prisoners came to Alexander to thank him for his kindness and were deceived. Instead of bowing to the king, they presented their homage and respect to the king's favorite. On hearing their excuses, Alexander simply said: "You did not make a mistake, ladies, for oftentimes my friend represents me." "Brethren, God entrusts His angels with so intimate an association in the ruling of the universe, that even the saints themselves, without the light of Faith, would be deceived. But, brethren, the angels do not want for themselves our adorations, our prayers, our homages, because they know that they as well as we must adore one God and Him alone. No matter how important and glorious the angels' natures and functions may be—were their mission, as we learn from the Apocalypse, to cast fire upon the earth, to hold the waves of the ocean, to set tempests loose (Apoc. viii.—5)—all bow humbly before the Great White Throne of God's abolute sovereignty.

I will conclude with this reflection: There are on earth sacred spots dear to heaven and which must be a special dwelling-place for the angels—our Tabernacles, in which resides the Holy of Holies, for where the King is there also is His court.

When the temple of Jerusalem, so often sullied

and profaned, was about to be invaded by idolaters, the voices of angels were heard to say, according to tradition: "Let us retire! Let us retire!" Far holier are our churches in which reside the Body, Blood and Divinity of Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, King of angels and men. Oh! then, holy angels, when I pass a Catholic Church I raise my hat in reverence to your divine watch over the earthly home of the Incarnate Word, present in the Sacrament of His love, and I join in your acts of adoration, praise and love, and repeat in the beautiful language of the Church: "Be blest, praised and loved forever, O Jesus, in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar." Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

THE GUARDIAN ANGELS.

Behold I will send My angel, who shall go before thee and keep thee in thy journey. If you take notice of him and hear his voice, he will bring thee one day into the immortal dwelling-place that I have prepared for thy soul. (Ex. xxiii.—20.)

Tobias, the most eminent of the saintly men whose deeds are recorded in the Old Testament, said to his son, the young Tobias: "My son, I lent ten talents of silver, while thou wert yet a child, to Gabelus, in Ragues, a city of the Medes." (Tob. iv.—21.) The journey there was long, the roads were unknown to the young man and dangers of every kind confronted him. Tobias, the father, knew this, but his fervent prayers moved the heart of God, who sent him the Archangel Raphael, in the form of a young man, to guide his son into the far-distant land. On their way, the angel not only removed the dangers, but gave good advice to the young man. One day the latter went to wash his feet in the river Tigris,

when on a sudden a monstrous fish sprang to devour him. (Tob. vi.—2.) The angel said : " Fear not ; take it by the gills and draw it upon the shore. You will find his flesh a good food, and its gills and liver will serve for medicine, which shall restore sight to your aged father." (Tob. vi.—5.) They resumed their journey, and at last espied a distant city. There, said the angel, lives Reguel, a near kinsman of thy father. He hath but one daughter, Sara, and no other child besides her. It is God's will that you should take her for your wife. Ask her therefore of her father. (Tob. vi.—11, 13.) The marriage took place and the devil, bound by the angel, (Tob. viii.—2) could not kill Tobias as he had done the seven other husbands that went in unto her before him. Finally, the angel conducted Tobias to Gabelus, received the money, (Tob. ix.—6) and brought young Tobias back in safety to his father. (Tob. 9.)

This is the story of the angel guardian.

Let us consider three things in reference to this heavenly being : that we have a guardian angel, his mission or functions, and our duties toward him.

We all have a guardian angel. Yes, brethren, Almighty God has decreed, in His love for men, that one of His own angels should accompany man in his journey through life. The Creator speaks to us on the threshold of life as He spoke ofold to

the Jewish people : " Little child, behold I will send My angel, who shall go before thee and keep thee in thy journey. If you take notice of him and hear his voice, he will bring thee one day into the immortal dwelling-place that I have prepared for thy soul." " Do not think him one to be contemned, for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and My name is in Him." (Ex. xxiii.—21.) Our Blessed Lord said one day to those standing around Him : " See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels always see the face of My father who is in Heaven." (Matt. xviii.—10.) All the Doctors of the Church have taught the existence of the guardian angels. " Let us bless the heavenly spirits," says St. John Damascene, " because they watch over us like faithful guardians. St. Bonaventure says : " Our guardian angels love us because Christ loves us. God's friends are our friends. So come to our help, holy, holy angels," continues the holy Doctor, " you inspire, you protect and guide us in our ways." Yes, brethren, we all have guardian angels. It is a truth revealed by God Himself and is very consoling to us.

What are His functions or mission ? Our guardian angel removes all danger from us, he inspires us with good thoughts, he prays for us, he shields us against all dangers, spiritual and sometimes temporal. As the Angel Raphael protected the young

Tobias against unseen dangers, so in like manner we may have been saved from many serious accidents by the care of our guardian angel. This is not a mere hearsay idea, for we find it in the Inspired Writings. The Prophet David says: "For God hath given His angels charge over thee in all thy ways; in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Ps. xc.—11.)

Our guardian angels protect us in spiritual dangers. The lives of St. Teresa, St. Lucy, St. Agnes, show His powerful intervention in preventing the accomplishment of the designs of the devil. A cursory glance over our own lives will show us in many circumstances why we came out victorious from so many combats against virtue, truth and honesty.

He also inspires us with good thoughts. Have you ever perceived in yourselves the still, small voice whispering to you and condemning your actions. Well, this inspiration, this secret feeling of judgment is none other than the warning voice of your angel, who one day shall be heard before the dread tribunal, pleading earnestly for the salvation of your soul.

In return for such a display of kindness and solicitude in our regard, we should *respect* the presence of our angel and *prove docile* to his inspirations *and thank him daily for his loving care.*

The young Tobias recounted all the benefits which he had received through the ministry of Raphael. His father replied : " Son, what can we give to this holy man, who is come with thee?" (Tob. xii.—2.) And they decided to give him half of what they had brought from Gabelus ; but the angel said to Tobias, that the way of recognizing his benefits was to bless, thank and praise God for all His mercies. (Tob. xii.—18.) This is the only thankfulness, the only reward which our angels require from us.

Let us be servants of God, faithful in the discharge of our Christian duties, and it will be the best proof of our gratitude. We owe respect to our guardian angel. We respect those we love and honor. We will honor our angel in thinking of him and his incomparable dignity. We should ever remember the sweet prayer which we lisped upon our mother's knee : " Good night, sweet angel ; to God and to thee I commend myself ; thou hast kept me safe this day, watch over me this night." Have we forgotten, in later years, amid the weary, bustling scenes of life's stormy pathway, the sweet recollections of by-gone years, bearing such a heavenly fragrance in their innocence and purity ? " Let us go back to the days of childhood, and we shall resemble the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii.—3.)

We should honor the presence of our guardian

angel. If your conscience was an open book, would you like people to read your thoughts of hatred, of jealousy, of impurity ; would you dare to commit before men your secret, hidden sins ? Still, your guardian angel sees your actions and reads your most hidden thoughts. In looking around the world and seeing so many libertines, so many bad Christians neglectful of the salvation of their immortal souls, we are inclined to ask ourselves if these unfortunates are deprived of the assistance of the guardian angels. No, indeed, they are not ; but the angels could say of them what they said of ancient Babylon : " We would have cured her, but she is not healed." (Jer. li.—9.)

Brethren, if you wish to be healed of the disease of sin and effectively protected by your guardian angel, follow his inspirations, and you shall be conducted safely to the happiness of God's elect and take part in their heavenly functions of adoring, praising and thanking the God of boundless love and mercy. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

BAD ANGELS.

Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour. (Peter v.—8.)

I wish to prove this morning, dear brethren, the existence of the wicked angels from the testimony of the Sacred Scriptures, and then show their relation to man in his struggle for heaven.

1. The angels whom God created at the beginning of time in a state of happiness did not persevere in that state; they did not come out victorious from the trial to which they were subjected. Lucifer, the brighest of all the angels, the very one whom we call "Satan," which means "adversary of God," dared disobey his Creator and carried into his rebellion a large multitude of the angels. Then, says the Scripture, there was a great battle in the heavens. The Archangel St. Michael fought Lucifer and his rebellious ones. (Apoc. xii.—7.) The chastisement was not delayed. Their chief fell, like lightning from heaven, (Luke x.—18) and all those who had followed him shared in

his punishment. Hell, from that moment, was forever created. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer," exclaims the Prophet Isaias, "who didst rise in the morning! How art thou fallen to the earth! Thou hast said in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit in the mountain of the covenant. I will ascend above the height of the clouds and I will be like the Most High." (Is. xiv.—12.) The Prophet Ezechiel confirms in the same sublime strain: "Thou wast the seal of the resemblance of God, full of wisdom and perfect in glory! In beauty thou wast a cherub stretching out thy wings and covering. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the days of thy creation and thou hast sinned. I cast thee out of the mountain of God and destroyed thee, O covering cherub, out of the midst of the stones of fire." (Ezech. xxviii.—12, 14 & 15.)

Yes, brethren, from that very instant the almighty power of God confined Lucifer and his associates in the prison of hell and subjected him and them to untold tortures. Tortures of mind and body, tortures in memory and understanding; and from that abode of direful punishments the hatred of Satan and his angels have spread all over the world, and we feel its baneful effects.

In truth, brethren, we cannot deny the existence of these spirits of evil without undermining the

foundations of our holy Faith. If the devil does not exist, Adam and Eve were not tempted and did not sin against God, and consequently the redemption of man by the shedding of the Blood of Christ was not necessary. The Gospel which tells us of the personal combats of Christ (Matt. iv.—1 & foll.) (Mark, v.—8) and the devil would be false and Christianity a myth, unworthy of our belief. The history of nations as well as the Sacred Scriptures tells us that the devil was adored for many ages as a divinity, and that this spirit of evil uttered oracles and wrought many stupendous things to confirm the pagan nations in their false worship. Read the lives of the saints—of St. Anthony, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Hilarion, St. Francis of Rome—all had to suffer from his persecution, his assaults and even from his ill-treatment. To deny the existence of bad angels is to deny the truth of Christianity, the testimony of history and the statements of our greatest saints.

2. Satan exists, and his existence is proven also by the power which he exercises in every age and clime.

He is the tempter of men ; he attacks them like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour ; (Peter v.—8) that is to say, trying to kill souls, in driving them into evil and snatching them from Christ. He and his ministers of evil do every-

thing in their power to seduce the human race and lead it into evil. Yes, brethren, the demons are the adversaries of men and of the Most High. Just gaze at the world and its history. The devil is the author of all the evil which men do ; he is the inspirer of all the crimes which they commit. From the days of Adam, sin and its baneful consequences can be laid at his door. He drove Cain to kill his brother Abel ; (Gen. iv.—8) he led the first inhabitants of earth into that slough of sin which brought upon them the deluge ; (Gen. vi.—5) he was the author of the pollutions and vices which disgraced the histories of pagan nations. Jesus Christ came into this world. From His birth Satan persecuted Him ; (Matt. ii. —16) he drives Judas to betray Him ; (Matt. xxvi.—48) and the Jews to nail Him to the cross. (xxvii.—31.) The Church being established, he stirs up the might and power of the Roman Empire to wipe her off the face of the earth. But tell me, unfortunate angels, what have men done to you ? " They love Christ and we hate Him," is their answer. If we could ascertain the reason why they have been the instigators of so many frightful crimes, we would find the reason in their insane hatred of God. Heretics, libertines and indifferent Christians are their slaves.

And even in our days, brethren, do we not witness the power of Satan over souls ? Read our

daily papers which are, alas ! his most powerful emissaries, deluging the world with news leading to vice and crime. They herald the foul works committed by these children of Satan, while the devil hides himself and seeks shelter behind the names of liberty or superstition. But be not deceived, brethren, the bad angels exist, and as the tree is known by its fruits, "by their works you shall know them." (Matt. vii.—16.)

Let us pray then to the conqueror of the devil—Jesus Christ—to crush his power in hearts and in the world. In order to succeed in our endeavors, let us follow the advice of St. Peter : "Watch and pray, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour." (Peter v.—8.) We must employ vigilance, faith and prayer to conquer our enemy. Be not frightened by his power. Our Blessed Lord is infinitely stronger. No matter how alluring vice and temptation are, if we be faithful to the inspirations of grace, we shall triumph over his machinations, for the grace of God is all-powerful and sufficient. (II. Cor. xii.—9.) Let us often repeat from the bottom of our hearts the solemn renunciation of our Baptism : "Yes, I renounce Satan with all his works and pomps, and promise to be faithful to my baptismal vows and follow Christ." May God ever grant us the grace to be faithful to these sacred engagements ! Amen.

SERMON XXV.

THE CREATION OF MAN.

Let us make man to our image and likeness. (Gen. i. —26.)

When God saw that all things that He had made were good, He formed man out of the slime of the earth and breathed unto him the breath of life. (Gen. ii.—7.) Man, then, as the catechism teaches, is a being composed of a body and soul. Allow me, brethren, to pass a few reflections upon these two parts of our nature.

1. A celebrated physician, after describing the human body, repeated the words of a pagan philosopher : " I have sung the grandest hymn in honor of the Creator." Indeed, brethren, when we consider the body of man, we are forced to exclaim : " What a masterpiece! " Behold the noble and imposing attitude of the human body, with head erect, the high forehead reflecting the intelligence which predominates over the whole being; the eyes, the mirrors of the soul, are placed like two sentinels to guide and watch ; the ears to catch the sounds ;

the mouth and tongue to articulate and express the thoughts of the rational soul animating it. Yes, everything in the human body tells of its superiority and excellence over the other animals. I acknowledge, however, that some animals are stronger than man, but he is their master by reason. For instance, man is not as strong as the lion, as tall as a tree, as hard as a rock—still all these creatures are subject to his power and will. God has given us in our members the means to progress and execute the conceptions of the will ; furthermore, God has drawn to Himself many of the elect by means of this body of ours.

The bodies of the martyrs, confessors, virgins, that of the Immaculate Virgin, and even ours, were dignified by the Incarnation of Christ. So I am not astonished to see God create man's body in such a magnificent state; I am not astonished that the Church pays so much respect to the mortal remains of the Christian who has died in the peace of the Lord. To pagans and unbelievers, what is the body but the destined food of worms ? To the Christian the body is stamped with the seal of immortality. That body, sanctified by the last sacraments, like the Saviour's body, shall rise to life to die no more, and shall share the happiness and dignity of the soul which animated it during life

Do you understand, brethren, why we venerate and even consecrate our cemeteries; why we hold

these places in such great reverence? Do not go to the graves of your parents or friends, awaiting there for the resurrection day, through sentiment or false love, but approach them in the spirit of faith and say : " The dust of the parent whom I mourn will be reanimated on the day of judgment by the breath of God."

2. For, indeed, we all have a soul, and no man can deny it unless he denies he is a man. God, speaking in the plural number to convey to us the plurality of persons in the Deity, said : " Let us make man to our image and likeness." (Gen. i.—26.) This image and likeness of God is not in the body of man, but in his soul, which is a spiritual being endowed with understanding and free will.

Our soul resembles God by its intelligence. Man alone in this world can, by the power of understanding, know good and evil. His intelligence, though not infinite, for God alone is infinite, is far superior to the instinct of the animal, and can be brought to a greater perfection. For instance, the bird builds its nest in the same way ever since its creation ; animals do not improve their condition, while man every day progresses, spiritually, temporally and intellectually. The scientific progression of our century is truly marvelous, and this great gift of intellect bestowed on man comes from God. Our soul resembles God also by free will. We are free as God was free to

create or not to create ; we are free to practice virtue or to do evil, free to observe God's laws, free to break them. Liberty, then, is the seal of our dignity. The other beings of creation are not free. The sun is not free to rise or to set at will ; the lion or the tiger is not free to be either a wild or a domestic animal, it must follow the instincts of nature. Man alone is free to obey or rebel against God's laws, and this noble faculty of free will is what characterizes man from the brute creation and proves the dignity and divine origin of his soul.

Let us use, therefore, our body, with its senses and organs, our soul, with her intelligence and free will, for the greater glory of God. The body is the instrument through which the soul sees the wonders of God's creation. The eyes, for instance, reveal to the soul the grandeur and economy shown forth in the government of the universe and lead the intelligence to the knowledge of God's perfections ; the ears hear the teachings and explanations of the mysteries of the Faith ; the body, then, even by its fasts and mortifications, has its share in the benefits bestowed upon the soul by God and its merits in the work of our sanctification and salvation.

Then, brethren, let our bodies be the pure dwelling-places of our immortal souls ; let our knowledge be subservient to a virtuous life. Vain in-

deed, would be the man who, carried away with the intoxication of scientific thoughts, allows his soul to languish and pine for want of spiritual food. And let us also respect our bodies, which shall be the companions of our souls during eternity, remembering that they have been created to the image and likeness of God, and that they have been bought with a great price—the Blood of Jesus Christ. Bear in mind His words : "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul ?" (Matt. xvi.—26.) The riches of this world could not purchase a human soul, for a soul is more valuable than the whole world. Let us pray, therefore, to Jesus that His precious Blood may not have been shed in vain, but that men, having a proper knowledge of their dignity, may lead Christian lives and save their souls, created to the image and likeness of God.

Amen.

SERMON XXVI.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL OF MAN.

I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living. (Ps. xxvi.—13.)

The soul of man shall never die, brethren, on account of its essence. The body dies when its different parts are separated. But the soul has no parts, that is to say, no head, no feet, no arms, no heart, and consequently cannot be destroyed. God alone, by His almighty power, can destroy it ; but far from willing its destruction, He has conferred upon it the glorious prerogative of immortality. "The wicked," says He, "shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting." (Matt. xxv.—46.) This great truth has been proclaimed by all the nations of antiquity. "Besides," says St. Augustine, "nature itself reveals this truth, which has been so deeply impressed on the human heart by the Creator." To deny the immortality of the human soul is to impugn God in His perfections, and speak against common sense and the aspirations of the soul.

1. God is just, and consequently has given to the soul an immortal life ; otherwise the world would be led astray by a pernicious doctrine. If after death all is dead, like the brute, what is the use of practising virtue ? What is the use of aspiring each day to a greater perfection ? That doctrine teaches not hope, but despair. According to it, the soul of a St. Vincent of Paul and a criminal's would be equal after death. The saints—the true friends of humanity—and the criminals—the pests of society—would be equalized after death, because if there is no immortality there is no justice. How absurd ! What inconsistency ! If this doctrine were preached, the world would be on the straight road to ruin, calamity and dissolution. Its consequences sufficiently show the falsity and absurdity of the principle from which they spring.

2. All men—if we except a handful who have a personal interest in having no soul, and all the non-civilized nations of the world of the most ancient times, from the Assyrians, who had special services for the dead, to the Indians of our North American continent, who placed pipes, tobacco and arms in the graves of their dead—have believed in the immortality of the soul. The long cycles of years could not erase this belief from the hearts of men, though they effaced from them a just conception of the true God.

3. The soul is immortal, brethren,—it aspires after immortality with all its powers. The soul wants more and more light, more life, more love. Can we ascribe this insatiable thirst to no cause? What! The soul aspires to infinite light and God will give it everlasting darkness? The soul hungers and thirsts after life, and God will satisfy its cravings with naught but everlasting death? Oh, no, brethren, that cannot be, for this desire of immortality is not only a need, but a reality. For, brethren, there are souls in this world which are constantly brought to a greater perfection by suffering and love; they are purified, and possess a beauty that no one can deny, and for what, if there be no immortality? You have been working brethren, for the past twenty or thirty years to make your hearts pure and above everything low and mean, but when these hearts are about to receive the reward of their labors, the realization of their aspirations, are they to be disappointed? Is everything to come to pass as in a dream? Indeed, no, brethren; for should anyone say to you: "You have suffered, hoped and loved, but all in vain; you have mourned your parents and friends dead before you, but in vain, for there is no immortality. You were mistaken; the soul dies with the body";—would you not reply to these despairing words, brethren? "No, it cannot be, the whole world and the aspirations of the hearts of all men cannot be so deceived."

Indeed, brethren, to deny the immortality of the soul is to destroy its noblest aspirations, to assert that all the nations are mistaken, and to insult God in the most admirable work of His creation. Yes, God is the living Father who cares tenderly for the souls He has created. Why then should He destroy them after having poured His choicest graces upon them for 20 or 30 years? He would be less than that woman praised by the Scripture, who mourned bitterly for her children because they were no more. (Matt. ii.—18.) Yes, He would be less than she, for if God destroyed the souls which He made to His image and likeness—souls which have suffered, prayed and loved on earth—if He destroys them, then He is less than Rachel, who would not be consoled because her children were no more. What kind of a God would He be to enjoy a happy eternity after the destruction of His own children? But no, brethren, we shall see God in the land of the living, according to the promise of the Prophet. (Ps. xxvi.—13.)

Yes, we shall see Him in the land of the living. Holy Church consoles her dying children with this assurance of the immortality of their souls. She places in their hands the image of the God Who died to save them, and thus filled with hope, the Christian sees in death the dawn of the never-ending day of immortality, and the room where he

expires, in the peace of the Lord, seems to be filled with a perfume of immortality. And while our eyes are watching, in tears, the works of death, everything tells us that the soul which departed from this mortal life is already in the realms of immortality. Amen.

SERMON XXVII.

THE CREATION OF EVE.

It is not good for man to be alone : let us make him a help like unto himself. (Gen. ii.—18.)

When God had bestowed upon man all the graces which made him "king and pontiff" of the whole universe, He placed him in the beautiful garden of Paradise or Eden to till and keep it. Work, as you see, is a condition of man's nature, since the obligation of dressing and keeping the garden of Eden was imposed upon the first man. But of course that work was not of an exhausting character ; it was rather an agreeable distraction, a pastime—as when one cultivates a flower for his personal pleasure. And then, relates the Book of Genesis, "the Lord having previously formed out of the ground all the beasts of the earth and all the fowls of the air, brought them to Adam, who, as they were passing before him, called all the beasts by their names and all the fowls of the air and all the cattle of the field : but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself." (Gen. ii.—20.)

In truth, brethren there was no one to accom-

pany the first man in his work, or to charm him during his leisure hours. Alone, without company or conversation, he had no one with whom he could share and enjoy the benefits showered upon him; but he was happy, trusting in the Divine Providence which had been so good to him. He was right; for soon after, God, moved with compassion at the sight of His most perfect creature's solitude, and wishing to give him a gift worthy of His infinite love, spoke the most loving words which ever fell from His divine lips: "It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself." (Gen. ii.—18.) But will that help be made, like the first man, out of the slime of the earth? No, brethren; desiring to teach, in the creation of the first woman, precious lessons to generations to come, the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it, and the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam, into a woman, brought her to Adam, who awakening said: "This is the bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." (Gen. ii.—23.) And the first man and woman knelt before the Creator, Who united them and blessed them, saying: "Increase and multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air and all the living creatures that move upon the earth." (Gen. i.—28.)

This was, brethren, the first matrimonial cele-

bration. Nothing is holier, nothing is more sublime than this first marriage. God Himself presents the bride to the groom. God is at the same time the father, the witness, the priest, and it is before His Majesty that both are united forever. Wherefore, says He, "a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." (Gen. ii.—24.) Unfortunately this sacred union, that intimate affection, was unknown to pagan antiquity and to modern Mormonism and Mohammedanism, and more unfortunately, is profaned in our own day by so-called Christians who admit the existence of that modern abomination—the divorce law. Divorce renders marriage a mere sensual contract, revocable at one's caprice; it is an outrage against God and society. But the Catholic Church and she alone has ever upheld the sanctity and indissolubility of the marriage tie. Our Blessed Lord elevated it to the dignity of a sacrament. The Church lost one of the fairest portions of her flock in defending the holiness of marriage—she lost England by not sanctioning the adulterous union of Henry the VIII. with Ann Boleyn; she will lose, maybe, more of her children, but she will maintain, in spite of all, the holiness of one of the holiest institutions of our religion; she will keep pure the course of the human race by not putting asunder what God has united forever. (Matt. xix.—6.)

Besides, brethren, has not St. Paul declared that marriage is a great sacrament representing the union of Christ with His Church? Adam was asleep near a tree when Eve was made out of one of his ribs, the nearest to his heart. The Church springs from the transpierced rib of Jesus Christ as He was dying on the Cross; and the blood and water which issued from it were the symbols of the Sacraments which are giving life to her. Adam exclaims on seeing Eve: "Behold, here is the bone of my bones, the flesh of my flesh." (Gen. ii.—23.) Christ, in forming and giving life to the faithful by means of the Holy Eucharist, can truly say: "Behold, here is the bone of My bones and flesh of My flesh." Finally, brethren, as man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, so Christ also leaves His father to cleave to His spouse, the Holy Church, by residing day and night in her holy Tabernacles. Truly, brethren, the union of Adam and Eve was a symbol of that union which exists beween Christ and His Church.

St. Thomas also tells us that Eve was drawn out of Adam to establish well that Adam is the sole principle of his kind, in contradistinction to the theories of materialists and evolutionists. Besides, the first woman was not taken from Adam's head, because she is not destined, in the designs of God, to be superior to man, nor drawn from his feet, because she is not the slave or servant of man, but

drawn from Adam's side near the heart, because man is bound to love his wife as himself.

The creation of Eve, brethren, teaches husbands and wives their obligations, which St. Paul has beautifully expressed in these words: "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church. Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life." (Eph. v.—22 & foll.)

Happy are those who are ever mindful of the sanctity of the union and reciprocity of love which should exist between married people! Happy are the husbands and wives who are ever mindful of the duties which they owe to each other and of the obligations which the marriage life imposed upon them—the bringing up their children in the fear and love of God; yes, happy they are, for the grace of God, conferred upon them by the Sacrament of Matrimony, will direct them in every difficulty, comfort them in the hour of trial, and will be a continual source of peace, of joy, of mutual affection on earth, and a pledge of their eternal and perfect union in Heaven. Amen.

THIRD PART OF THE CREED.

GOD REDEEMER.

Second to Seventh Article.

II.—I believe in Jesus Christ.

III.—Conceived by the Holy Gost, born of the Virgin Mary.

IV.—Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

V.—Descended into Hell, the third day rose from the dead.

VI.—Ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God.

VII.—Thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

SERMON XXVIII.

ADAM'S FALL, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The woman shall crush the serpent's head, who shall lie in wait for her heel. (Gen iii.—15.)

Adam and Eve, innocent and holy, were enjoying in the Garden of Paradise all the benefits which God had showered upon them. Their bodies were perfect in beauty, strength and gracefulness; their souls possessed a complete science, their intelligence and will were bright, sound and just; the divine virtues of faith, hope and charity dwelt in their hearts. As their bodies were free from deformities, their souls were not subject to the revolts of the flesh. The senses were subordinate to reason, and reason to divine grace, and a perfect harmony reigned over them. Endowed with free will, our first parents had to merit the eternal happiness destined for them by God, and God was satisfied with a single exterior act of good-will, for He said to Adam and Eve: "Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat, but of the tree of knowledge of

good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." (Gen. ii.—17.)

Oh, brethren, will our first parents use God's greatest gift to man—liberty—to their Master's glory? Will they use it to pay homage and submit their will to their Creator's? If they keep the divine command, a constant state of happiness in this life and everlasting glory in the next await them and their posterity. But Satan, jealous of their happiness and destined glory, assumed the form of a serpent and said to Eve, who was alone: "Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of Paradise?" (Gen. iii.—1.) Eve, who was not surprised at hearing the serpent speak, because God and the angels had many times before manifested themselves to her in material forms, answered the serpent, who had not yet been cursed, and consequently inspired no repulsion: "Of the fruits of the trees that are in Paradise we do eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of Paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die." (Gen. iii.—3.) To listen to the devil is the first step toward yielding to temptation. "Oh, no," replied the serpent; "no, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes will be opened, and you shall

be as Gods, knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and fair to the eyes and delightful to behold : and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave to her husband, who did eat also." (Gen. iii.—4, 5 & 6.)

Indeed, brethren, there cannot be any better example of a woman's influence. A Christian mother will sanctify her husband and keep a lively faith in the hearts of her children, while a proud, light-headed, irreligious mother will exercise a sad influence over the family circle and those around her.

Immediately after eating the forbidden fruit the eyes of our first parents were opened to the deception which had been practiced upon them by the devil. They had lost original grace with their innocence and holiness. Whence followed a shame of their being naked, which they minded not before. Being now stripped of original grace, they covered their bodies with fig-leaves. "And when they heard the voice of God calling to them, they hid themselves from the face of the Lord, amidst the trees of Paradise, (Gen. iii.—8) and the Lord said : Adam, where art thou ? Adam answered : Lord, I heard thy voice in Paradise and I was afraid, because I was naked and I hid myself. (Gen. iii.—9.) And He said to him : Who hath told you that thou wast naked, that thou hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat ?" (Gen. iii.—10 & 11.)

Instead of humbly confessing his sin, Adam accused his wife, and his wife the serpent. Both even made their sin worse in reproaching the Lord for having created the means of their fall and given them free will. The justice of God fell upon them, and they and their posterity were doomed to misery, sin, sickness and death. He said to the woman : " I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions : in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. (Gen. iii.—16.) And to Adam He said : Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, cursed is the earth in thy work ; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shalt it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou return." (Gen. iii.—17, 18 & 19.)

The punishment of Adam, brethren, continued for 900 years, and well we know that we are partakers of it. We all share in it, as we should have shared in his happiness if he had remained faithful. Original sin and its train of miseries has become our heritage here below. It has darkened our understanding, weakened our will and left us a strong inclination for evil. The crimes, sins and sufferings of 6,000 years are the results of this primeval fall. This great evil has inoculated the

whole human race. Nations after nations have been gangrened with it. All the misfortunes of life have their source in it. Death alone removes us from its baneful effects.

But, brethren, the justice of God is always tempered with mercy. God did not abandon man after his fall into sin. Though driven from the garden of Paradise by a Cherub brandishing a flaming sword, our first parents carried a hope in their hearts, a consolation in their misfortune: the promise of a Redeemer. God said to the serpent: "Because thou hast deceived the woman, thou art cursed among the beasts of the earth. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. iii.—14 & 15.) But, brethren, who is this woman whose seed shall crush the serpent's head, if not the Blessed Virgin, immaculate in her conception, whose blessed fruit, Jesus, shall redeem fallen humanity?

Yes, brethren, our first parents transmitted to their children their longing for their Redeemer. It was a gleam of heaven's sunshine in the dark horizon of their sad fate, and the prophets and the just longed for this promised Liberator. "Drop down the dew, ye heavens," exclaims Isaias, "from above; let the clouds rain the just, let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour." (Is. 45.—8.) And the promise made by God to our first parents

has been fulfilled, for the Just has come from heaven to teach us, and burst forth from the grave, glorious and immortal, thus opening to us the gates of heaven, which had been shut by the sin of our first parents, and which alone the Redeemer could re-open. Amen.

SERMON XXIX.

TRANSMISSION OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned. (Rom. v.—12.)

A king having left his hunting party, penetrated into the depths of the forest. Soon he perceived the sound of voices ; he drew near, and heard a wood-cutter and his wife bitterly complaining of the miseries of life. The woman was murmuring against God and reproaching our first parents with their disobedience and fall. The king broke in upon their lamentations and said : " My dear friends, you are unhappy ; come with me to my palace and I will make you happy." The king kept his word, and the former wood-cutter and his wife ceased not to praise and bless their benefactor. The king came one day to see them, and during the course of his visit said : " My friends, you remember the lowliness of your former condition ; here you are surrounded with every luxury, and all your wishes are gratified. You and your posterity shall enjoy this happiness, but on one condition : Of all the

dishes placed before you at the table you can eat, but the covered one placed in the centre you shall not touch. The day you break my command will witness your return, with your children, to your former humble position." The king retired, and the happy couple exhausted their praises of this good sovereign, giving them the wealth of this world on so easy a condition. A few days passed ; the woman's curiosity was aroused ; she wished to know what that particular dish contained. "The orders of the king are formal : the day we shall disobey them we shall be expelled from this palace," said the husband. "Oh, I will only cast a glance at it ; nobody will see me, and I will be satisfied," was the woman's reply. The husband remonstrated with her, but all to no use. At last, allowing her curiosity to get the better of her common sense, she lifts the lid of the dish, and, lo ! a little white mouse jumps on the table, then on the floor, and finally disappears. The woman screams, the king enters, and at a glance sees the cause of the consternation. "You have disobeyed my command," said the angry king ; "go back to your forest and poverty with your children."

Now, brethren, I would like to know if any injustice has been done to these people and to their children by the king ? I say, "No "; because no injustice is done a child sharing in the poverty of his parents, and the parents brought that poverty

upon themselves by their own free will. Now there is no injustice done by God in transmitting original sin to the posterity of Adam and Eve, because all men born of sinful parents must share in that guilt. This assertion, brethren, is upheld by the infallible Council of Trent : " If anyone says that Adam's sin has been hurtful but to himself and not to his posterity ; if anyone says that his state of justice and sanctity has been lost only for himself and not for us ; or if anyone says that, stained with the sin of disobedience, Adam has transmitted to the human race only physical infirmities and not sin itself, which is the death of the soul,—let him be anathema ;"—because he contradicts the Apostle St. Paul, who says : " Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned." (Rom. v.—12.)

Original sin is not only the cause of our sufferings and death here below, but if not washed away in the regenerating waters of Baptism, it deprives us of the vision of God hereafter, for Christ says : " Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John iii.—5.) Then man, although created by an infinitely good God, bears the stigma of original transgression, and the Bible forcibly proclaims this terrible mystery of its transmission.

"Who can make clean what is conceived of unclean?" exclaims Job! (Job. xiv.—4.) Everyone, indeed, is born unclean. "For behold," says the Psalmist, "I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me." (Ps. l.—7.) St. Paul says, "As by one man we have sinned, so through one man, our Lord Jesus Christ, we have received reconciliation." (Rom. v.—12.) This assertion of St. Paul has been taught by the most learned Christian doctors. The testimonies of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Athanasius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, clearly teach this doctrine, and all the nations by their traditions uphold it.

But why are we thus responsible for the sin of our first parents? Plutarch, a pagan philosopher, will answer you: "There are," says he, "collective beings who can be guilty as well as individuals.' Indeed, brethren, this assertion is true, and allow me to illustrate it. England and Russia are justly stigmatized for their cruel laws in governing Ireland and Poland; still all Englishmen and Russians did not share in this oppression and tyranny. The Jewish nation bears the mark of infamy and shame for the crucifixion of the Redeemer, still all the Jews did not participate in that abominable act of deicide, committed 1,900 years ago.

Then, brethren, if all the citizens of a country are responsible for the official acts of its government

or for the actions performed in common, with far greater reason the children of a family are responsible for the acts of the family and share in its shame or glory. It is so true, that you would not like to see your children associate with the children of criminals and murderers, and why? Because you fear their company. For the parents leave not only a good or a bad name to their children, but bequeath them a physical and moral resemblance, so that the parents survive in their children, morally and physically. Now there is nothing else in the transmission of original sin from Adam and Eve to the human race. Sin degraded and corrupted their nature, morally and physically. These degradations and corruptions are transmitted to us, their descendants; and while the body will always be subject to death and misery, the soul can be purified by the salutary waters of Baptism, so that we can truly say with St. Paul: "The sin of one man brought all men to condemnation, as also by the justice of one, our Lord Jesus Christ, all men are brought to justification and life." (Rom. v.—18.) Amen.

SERMON XXX.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee. (Cant. iv.—7.)

"Was there any one preserved from the guilt of original sin?" asks the catechism. "Yes," is the answer, "the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Yes, brethren, the blessed creature who was to be associated to the Blessed Trinity in the admirable work of our Redemption, through the merits of her Divine Son, was preserved from the stain of original sin, in the very instant of her conception, and this singular grace is called the "Immaculate Conception." Such a marvelous exemption from the universal law, unique in the history of humanity, though justified by the high destiny to which the Blessed Virgin was called in the designs of the Eternal, needs to be explained to you; and I will lay before you abundant proofs that the faithful always kept the pious belief of the Immaculate Conception, and then give you reasons why the Church holds it an article of Faith

First of all, *Tradition* gives testimony to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. After Origen, one of the celebrated Doctors of the Church, who lived in the year 185 after Christ, and who declared that Mary was not breathed upon by the poisonous breath of the serpent ; after St. Amphilogius, bishop of Iconia ; St. Ambrose, archbishop of Milan ; St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo—who all three lived in the 4th century, and declared that the Blessed Virgin was never defiled by original sin, "on account," says the latter, "of the honor of the Lord"; after these testimonies of the Fathers of the Church, we find that the feast itself was celebrated in the East as early as the sixth century. The Spanish Church honored this feast in the eighth, and in the ninth we find the Neapolitan Church falling into line with her sister churches in honoring Mary under the title of "Immaculate." In the year 1066 the feast was established in England, and spread through the eloquent preaching of St. Anselm. France and Germany vied with each other in honoring Mary Immaculate. In 1476, Sixtus IV. ordained that the feast of the Immaculate Conception should be kept as a holyday of obligation in the city of Rome, the centre of Catholicity ; and Pius V., who reigned from 1566 to 1572, inscribed it in the calendar of the Roman breviary, and extended the obligations of its observance to the universal Church. Finally,

Clement XI., about the year 1715, made the feast of the Immaculate Conception a holy-day of obligation for the whole Church.

We see clearly that this belief in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is not a novelty in the Church. The Christian Doctors, expressing the constant belief of their Church, loudly proclaimed in their teachings and writings that Mary Immaculate was never stained by either actual or original sin. There is nothing to wonder at, then, brethren, if to express publicly their belief in this dogma the Catholics of different ages and countries, during the course of years, established this feast, sooner or later, according to the more or less development of the Faith in their midst. No wonder, brethren, that Pius IX., beholding the universal belief of the Church regarding Mary's exemption from original sin, proclaimed it to be a dogma to be held in reverence by the whole Catholic Church. Never were such tidings received with such demonstrations of joy.

In the second place, *reason* furnishes arguments in favor of this dogma. The Immaculate Conception redounds to the honor of God Himself. In the assumption of our nature, God could not come even indirectly into contact with sin. He is the God of infinite holiness. Are we to suppose that He who came to redeem us from sin would permit Himself to be born of a woman, for an instant

in sin. Such reasoning is repugnant not only to the nature of God, but likewise to our own common sense. Justly has St. Alphonsus said that, "if God permitted Mary to conceive in sin, it would have been a disgrace to Himself."

We have another powerful reason why Mary was preserved from the guilt of sin. She played an important part in the great work of our redemption. She is the mother of the Redeemer, the spouse of the Holy Ghost, the daughter of the Eternal Father, consequently her interior beauty must have ever been pleasing to the Adorable Trinity. Suppose a son of earth could choose a mother for himself, would he not prefer a queen to a slave, a pure soul to one contaminated with vice. Besides, let us consider that Adam and Eve are our first parents according to the flesh, Christ and Mary are our progenitors according to grace. And since Eve, the mother of the living, was created immaculate and spotless, I conclude that Mary, who occupies a far higher dignity, must have been also immaculate in her conception.

I finally base this dogma on the *Sacred Scriptures*. "Hail, full of grace," (Luke i.—28) says the Archangel Gabriel to Mary. Why was Mary saluted full of grace, if not because she already possessed the fulness of grace, and was not, like other human beings, capable of increase of grace, and therefore was conceived without original sin?

Moreover, when God took the solemn engagement to put enmities beween the serpent and the woman, his seed and her seed, that she shall crush his head and he shall lie in wait for her heel, (Gen. iii.—15) the defeat of Satan would not be complete if sin, introduced by him into the world, had dwelt even for an instant in tne soul of the one who was to destroy his domination. No wonder then, brethren, if the Church applies to the Blessed Virgin these words of the canticle : "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee." (Cant. iv.—7.) No, there is no spot in the Virgin whom God possessed in the beginning of her ways. (Prov. viii.—22.)

The Immaculate Conception appears as clear as the noon-day sun. We must feel grateful indeed to the Pope of the Immaculate Conception for giving us the opportunity of honoring Mary in one of her sweetest titles and most becoming prerogatives. Let us, dear brethren, with hearts full of joy and gratitude, honor her, and through her, approach the throne of grace and obtain aid in seasonable time. May her sweet influence ever keep our hearts pure, guard and protect us against the dangers and temptations which are constantly before us, until we arrive to share in heaven's glory, with our Queen and Mother, Mary Immaculate.

Amen.

SERMON XXXI.

THE REDEEMER HAS COME.

Behold the Lamb of God : behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world. (John i.—29.)

God in His infinite mercy promised Adam and his posterity a Redeemer Who was to spring from their seed and crush the power of the serpent. This expectation consoled our first parents in their misfortune.

I will prove, this morning, that the Redeemer has come, by the prophecies, and also by the testimonies of the Jews themselves.

By the prophecies. From Adam to Noah the earth became very corrupted, and men plunged themselves into every kind of iniquity. "I will destroy man," (Gen. vi.—7) said the angry God ; but Noah and his family found grace before Him, and were saved from the flood. But when Noah's sons had increased and multiplied and filled the earth, what family was to bring forth the Messiah ? God points it out to Abraham, his servant : "I will multiply thy seed," said He, "as the stars of

heaven and the sands of the sea-shore, and in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed." (Gen. xxii.—18.) Again the Lord renews His promise to Jacob: "I am the Lord God of Abraham, the Lord of Isaac: thou shall spread abroad to the West, and to the East, and to the North, and to the South, and in thee and in thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. xxviii.—14.) Jacob, on his death-bed, uttered this memorable prophecy: "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, till He comes that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations." (Gen. xlix.—10.) Indeed, brethren, this striking prophecy of Jacob proves that the Messiah has come, for the blessing foretold that the sceptre and the legislative power should not be utterly taken away from Juda's race till about the coming of Christ, as in fact it never was; is a demonstration against the modern Jews who claim that the Messiah has not yet come, for the sceptre has passed away from Juda. The Jews have had no king, no ruler, for the past 1,900 years.

Later on, the Prophet Isaias tells us: "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of this root, who standeth as an ensign for the people: Him the Gentiles shall beseech, and His sepulchre shall be glorious." (Is. xi.—10.) Really, brethren, in hearing a man who lived about one thousand years

before Christ, speaking so plainly of the conversion of the Gentiles, of the One Who shall stand as an ensign for the people and Whose sepulchre shall be glorious, can we hesitate a moment to believe that the Messiah was to come forth from the root of Jesse, especially when we consider that Jesse was King David's father, and that the same man who lived a thousand years before Christ explains further on : " Hear ye, therefore, O House of David, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear forth a Son, and His name shall be Emanuel, which means, God with us." (Is. vii.—14.) Could it be clearer, brethren ? But let the prophet continue : " The people that walketh in darkness have seen a great light ; to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen. For a Child is born to us, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come." (Is. ix.—6.) Is not this an extraordinary prophecy ?

Indeed, brethren, we follow the Redeemer by the inspired writings of the prophets from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac, Jacob and Juda, from Juda to Jesse and David, from David to Mary the Virgin. If a man had appeared in New York one hundred years ago and had foretold the birth of any leader of this

country, the fact would be looked upon as extraordinary. What to think then, brethren, of the fact, that different men at different times, hundreds of years before Christ, have not only foretold His birth, but went so far as to name the little town in which the Saviour of the world was to be born : "Thou, Bethlehem, Ephrata," exclaims Micheas, "art a little one among the thousands of Juda ; out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler of Israel, and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity." (Mich. v.—2.)

And still, brethren, this is not all. The prophets desire to convince us even more. One of them, Daniel, who lived five hundred years before the birth of Christ, will even give us the exact date of the advent of the Saviour. He seems to count the years on his fingers : "Take notice," says he, "that from the going forth of the world to the building up of Jerusalem again unto Christ's coming, there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks : and the streets shall be built again and the walls in troublesome times. And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and Christ shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week, and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation to

the end." (Dan. ix.—25, 26, 27 & 28.) There are, according to the method of numbering of the Jews, weeks of days, which is the space of seven days, and weeks of years, which is seven years. Just then, after seventy weeks of years, that is to say, 490 years, which brings us to the years 30 and 37, after Christ, the prophecy of Daniel has been fulfilled to the letter. The temple of Jerusalem is rebuilt, Christ dies on the cross, the Jewish nation is no more, the sacrifices prescribed by the Mosaic law are abolished, and for 1,900 years are offered in no part of the world ; the temple of Jerusalem has been destroyed by the Romans under Titus, and the Jews are scattered over the face of the world—an outcast nation in a state of desolation.

If time permitted, brethren, I could give you quotations from the Prophets Aggeus, Malachias, Ezechiel, Joel, and David, who all spoke of the greatness, of the humiliations, of the sufferings and death of Christ ; but I prefer giving you the explicit testimonies of the Jews, who believed that Redemption was at hand.

Testimonies of the Jews. When St. John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing, the Jews sent messengers to him, asking : "Who art thou, art thou Christ ?" (John i.—19.) They confessed by this action that they were in expectation of the Messiah. But St. John confessed that he was not

Christ : " I am," said he, " the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord. There hath stood One in the midst of ye whom ye know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." (John i.—27.) The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said : " Behold the Lamb of God : Behold him who taketh away the sins of the world." (John i.—29.) Not only the Jews, but even the Samaritans were expecting the coming of Christ. The Samaritan woman said to Jesus : " I know that the Messiah cometh Who is called Christ, therefore when He has come, He will tell us all things." (John iv.—25.)

From these very clear and cogent evidences we are certainly justified in believing that the Redeemer, the promised Messiah, the Lamb of God, appeared on earth 1,900 years ago to take away the sins of the world. Amen.

SERMON XXXII.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE REDEEMER.

Thanks be to God, who maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus. (II. Cor. ii.—14.)

The prophecies in relation to Christ are so clear, so succinct, so convincing, that many have advanced the objection that they were written after the time of Christ. Now, the Jews, who were the depositaries of the holy writings, though unwillingly, acknowledge that these inspired utterances are genuine and free from error. For they were translated into Greek and spread broadcast over the Roman Empire long before the birth of Christ at Bethlehem. The prophecies thus verified in the person of Christ, sufficiently prove that He is the Messiah ; but allow me, brethren, in order to establish more firmly this truth of the Christian Faith—that Christ was the promised Redeemer of mankind—to recall, in the first place, the miracles wrought by Himself and by His disciples, and in the second place, the establishment of His Church by twelve poor fishermen of Judea.

1. *A miracle*, brethren, is above the power of any created being and contrary to the established order and constitution of things. It is a deviation from the laws of nature: "God alone doeth wonders," says the Sacred Scripture: (Ps. lxxvi.—15.) because God is the only Master of nature making her laws, consequently the only One who can deviate from them. Christ wrought miracles to prove that He is the Redeemer, thus giving proofs of His mission to men. He has invested the prophets, the apostles and saints with His authority, to confirm the truth of His religion and to show the sanctity of His servants. We have read in the Gospels written by eye-witnesses, the narration of His wonders. It is sufficient to remind you that He has cured all kinds of maladies, even incurable ones: He made the blind see, the lame walk, the dumb speak, the deaf hear. By a single word He has lulled the raging storms and stilled the angry waves of the surging billows. He has raised the dead to life and He has even raised Himself from His sepulchre, glorious and immortal—and all these miracles have been worked in the broad daylight. The Jews and pagans were confounded by such an exhibition of divine power, and said that Christ had His power from the devil. I need not refute this absurd and blasphemous statement, brethren; I will simply say that impostors generally are followed through their lives,

but at death all worship ceases. Not so with Christ. He dies as a criminal on an infamous gibbet, and rises from the grave as a God, and from that moment begins His moral domination over the whole world. Indeed, wise were the words of Gamaliel to the Jews who wished to put the Apostles to death for preaching the doctrine of their Master: "Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do as touching these men, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God." (Acts v.—35.) Our Blessed Lord Himself affirmed His divinity when the Jews accused Him of having a devil. (John viii.—52.) "Before Abraham was made, I am." (John viii.—58.)

2. *The establishment of the Church* by twelve poor fishermen proves that Christ was the Redeemer, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, because it was the work of a God, and not the work of a man. Yes, it was the work of a God, otherwise how can we account for the conversion of nations sunk in their barbarous customs and heathenish practices, slaves to every vice, and carried away with every sensual passion? How can we account for their ready acceptation of a religion teaching humility to men full of pride; penance and mortification to men abandoned to sensuality; the contempt of

riches and worldly honors to ambitious and covetous men ; the forgiveness of injuries and the love of the neighbor to men filled with revenge and selfishness,—in a word, how can we account for the acceptation of a holy and austere doctrine by men who hardly had the idea of holiness, if not because it was the religion of a God and not the religion of a man ?

And still, brethren, this is not all. The poor and unknown Apostles had against them all the powers of the world—the emperors, the kings, the magistrates, the philosophers, the orators—all human influences were opposed to Christianity. During 300 years the Christians saw their properties confiscated ; they were sent into exile, debased to the condition of slaves ; they were martyred and murdered by thousands. Every day the ingenuity of their persecutors was employed in the invention of new torments to break their invincible faith. "The Christians to the lions," resounded through the gorgeous palaces and magnificent squares of pagan Rome. If the Church has not been drowned in the blood of her children, if, on the contrary, it was the seed whence sprung heroic souls burning with a holy ardor to confess Christ alone and Him crucified, indeed, it was because the Church was the work of a God, and that no human power could overthrow it. Indeed, St. Paul was right when he exclaimed : "Thanks be to

God, Who always maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus and manifested the odour of His knowledge by us in every place." (II. Cor. ii.—14.) Yes, the Church has triumphed, in spite of the insuperable obstacles placed in her way, showing forth that her Author was the Redeemer ; she has triumphed in every place, as it was foreseen by the Prophet Isaias : "Gather yourselves together, O ye people," says he, " and be overcome, and give ear, all ye lands afar off ; strengthen yourselves, and be overcome. Take counsel together, and it shall be defeated : speak a word, and it shall not be done, because God is with us." (Is. viii.—9 & 10.) And David in a burst of melancholy eloquence exclaims: " Why have the nations raged, and the people devised vain things ? The kings of the earth have stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord and His Christ ; but He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them ; and the Lord shall deride them." (Ps. ii.—2 & 4.)

Yes, Christ shall laugh at the vain efforts of His persecutors against Himself and His Church, because He is God the Redeemer, the Saviour of mankind. The blood of martyrs has not been shed in vain. Scarcely 40 years elapsed since her establishment, when she overran the habitable world ; her children were found in every race and clime ; and to-day, after 1,900 years, when during that length of time all human institutions have

died out, the Church, under the guidance of Christ's promise, " Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," (Matt. xxviii.—20) stands alone as the Pharos of nations, guiding mankind to its true destiny, holding aloft the torch of learning and sanctity, and standing, with the prophecies and the miracles, as the living proof of the divinity of her Founder, Jesus Christ, and of her indefectibility, for nothing, even the gates of hell, can ever prevail against her.

Amen.

SERMON XXXIII.

THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST.

The Word was God, (John i.—1) *and the Word was made flesh.* (John i.—14.)

The Messianic prophecies, the stupendous miracles of Christ and of His Apostles, the establishment of the Church, sufficiently prove that Christ is the promised Messiah—the Redeemer.

I will this morning lay before you some proofs demonstrating that Christ is a God and a man at the same time, possessing consequently a divine and a human nature, being, as He said Himself, one with His Father. (John x.—30.) In the Gospel He asserts in the clearest manner possible that He is the Son of God, equal to His Father in power and majesty. At the time of His passion, the High Priest asked Him if He were really the Son of God, and Christ replied: "You say that I am." (Matt. xxvi.—64.) Some time before His trial, Our Blessed Lord asked His disciples: "What do men say that the Son of man is?" They answered: "Some, John the Baptist, others,

Elias, Jeremias or one of the prophets." "But who do you say that I am," continued Our Lord. "Thou art Christ," exclaimed Peter, "the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi.—16.) "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona," said Jesus, "because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. xvi.—17.) Since, then, Christ said that He was God; and since unbelievers and atheists themselves have confessed that Christ, from a human standpoint, was the wisest, the greatest, the most perfect man that ever lived, we must believe Him, otherwise this wise, this great, this perfect man would be a liar and a blasphemer, and consequently could not claim our attention and respect.

St. Thomas, after the Resurrection, said to Jesus: "My Lord and my God," (John xx.—28) a very clear acknowledgment of the divinity of the Saviour. And St. John begins his incomparable Gospel with the sublime declaration of the divinity of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of man." (John i.—1, 3 & 4.)

Not only the Gospels, but the testimonies of the most illustrious Doctors of the Church affirm the God-head of Jesus Christ, and this truth

of divine Faith has been proclaimed formally by the General Council of Nice, held in 325, against the impious Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ, and asserted since in the canons of all the Œcumenical Councils. The Church, therefore, brethren, has settled by her infallible authority this article of our Faith in the insertion of this beautiful declaration in the Nicene Creed: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God of God, light of light, true God of true God: begotten and not made, consubstantial with the Father, by Whom all things were made." Indeed, brethren, the testimony of the Gospels, of Christ and of His Apostles, the miracles, the establishment of the Church, all amply demonstrate this formula of faith enunciated in the Nicene Symbol: Christ is the Son of God.

St. John says the Word is God and eternal, but he also declares that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John i.—14.) The Nicene Creed says that the Son came down from heaven and was made man for us and for our salvation. All the mysteries in the humanity of Christ—His baptism by St. John, His transfiguration on Mount Thabor, the testimony of Martha—prove that He was a real man. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, He was circumcised and suffered physical pains, hunger and thirst, the same as we do. Of

course this pain was voluntary—He suffered because it was His wish to do so. All the mysteries which took place in Christ were not accomplished in His divine nature, because God cannot suffer and die, but in His person as a man and according to human nature. It is evident, then, that Christ had a body like ours which He submitted to the sufferings, pains and miseries of life, save sin and its consequences: ignorance and concupiscence. Indeed, it would not be worthy of the Son of God if His nature had been soiled by sin. The Son of God, coming to destroy sin, had to free us from it. "For it was fitting," says St. Paul, "that we should have a High Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens." (Heb. vii.—26.) The blessed humanity of Our Lord was not formed by ordinary means, but was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost. His mother gave birth to Him and still retained her virginity. Thus conceived, the sacred humanity of Christ could have no association whatever with sin.

Christ had a soul like ours, for before His death, on the eve of His Passion, He said: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death;" (Matt. xxvi.—38) and on another occasion He exclaimed: "My soul is troubled." (John xii.—27.)

In speaking of the two natures in Christ, I must state also that they have a will proper to each.

He said in the Garden of Olives: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, I must drink it, Thy will be done and not Mine." (Matt. xxvi.—42.) When He willed the healing of the sick, He used a divine operation; but when He laid His sacred hands on the sick, it was a human one.

Finally, in the person of Christ, we find a human and a divine intelligence corresponding to a human and a divine will. "For the will," says St. Thomas, "is the necessary and indispensable companion of the intelligence—it is the light which directs the will." The Church teaches this duality and the hypostatic union requires it. Since it is true that the word of God took human nature, I must say that He possesses the essential faculties of the human soul, exclusive of the divinity. For if a single one of them were missing, the work of our Redemption would have been incomplete, for, according to the expression of St. Gregory, "that which has not been taken by Christ could not be cured." I say more: the work of our Redemption would have been impossible, because it was done through the merits of Christ, and Christ can deserve or merit only by His human will enlightened and directed by His human intelligence.

Now, brethren, this union of the two natures, with their distinct faculties—this melting into one of the Divinity and the Humanity of Christ—is what we call the mystery of the Incarnation.

Let us bow in adoration before this mystery of our holy Faith, before Christ,—true God and true man—Word of God and God Himself, Who was made flesh and Who, fulfilling the promise made to our first parents, dwelt among us to redeem us from the power of hell and open to us the gates of His heavenly kingdom. Amen.

SERMON XXXIV.

CHRIST BORE OUR SINS.

He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins. (Is. liii.—5.)

"After Adam's fall, neither the Gentiles, by natural light, nor the Jews, under the Mosaical law, could," says the Council of Trent, "free themselves from the bondage of sin and re-instate themselves in favor with God."

The first reason is, the offense against God committed by sin was infinite and required an infinite compensation. No one could repair this injury except Christ Jesus, Who was a God and a man at the same time, and Who bore our sins: "He was wounded for our iniquities and was bruised for our sins."

The second reason is this: Sin had so enfeebled, so corrupted the will of man, that without a very special grace from God, which he was not worthy to receive, he could not implore the divine aid under any circumstances. This truth is so evident, that the first man, in a state of holiness and innocence, could not resist the temptation of disobe-

dience ; how then could he in a state of sin regain the friendship of his Creator ? The fallen angels abandoned by God never did penance ; how could man abandoned by God do penance ? The first step to conversion is to will it, and man was so corrupted that he could not will it ; so Christ, the Man-God, came to satisfy for his transgressions. " He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins."

On the one hand is a Man-God, infinitely just, Who could not give up the rights of His justice, sinned against in an infinite manner ; on the other is a Man-God, infinitely good and merciful, wishing to extend to fallen man His forgiveness. How, then, is God to remove this difficulty ? To punish man with His infinite justice—destroy him, and at the same time forgive him with an infinite bounty—preserve him. Can God, though all powerful, destroy and preserve man ? Yes, He can destroy a man in another's place. He can save all men by destroying one. St. Paul says : " Therefore, as by the offence of one, unto all men to condemnation : so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners : so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just." (Rom. v.—18 & 19.)

I ask you now, brethren, if there is anything unreasonable in this, and if human justice does

not give us examples of such compensations? Our judges will punish a man by 30 days imprisonment or ten dollars fine for a breach of law. The fine, if paid, will free the man from jail. Christ by His death freed man from the prison of hell. We read in history that when Edward III., king of England, was besieging Calais in 1347, he carried on his military operations so successfully that the besieged town was on the verge of starvation. The French by their desperate defence had irritated him, and when they were compelled to beg for peace, the king refused to grant it, unless six of the most influential citizens gave themselves up so that he might wreak his fury on them. Six devoted men gave themselves up and presented Edward with the keys of the city. The proud conqueror sentenced them to die, and were it not for the tears and supplications of his wife, they would have been executed. These heroic men were substitutes for their fellow citizens, the same as Christ was a substitute for all men by bearing our sins and suffering the penalties for them.

"God has destroyed one man," says the Christian philosopher De Bonald, "instead of all men." And this man then shall be odious in the sight of God, since He is laden with the sins of all men; at the same time, this man, to Whom all men owe their salvation, shall be infinitely loved by God, since He obtained for them the forgiveness of their

sins. God can hate infinitely but a man, and love infinitely but Himself. Then the Man-God, hated as a guilty man and beloved as a God, will be destroyed in men's place: "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom. viii.—3.) He becomes the universal sinner, taking the whole responsibility of sin. "He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins."

The Man-God then, brethren, becomes the Mediator, the Saviour, the Redeemer of the human race and the Founder of a new alliance between man and God. Thus the Redeemer shall unite in Himself two equal characters, opposed to each other. He shall be at the same time, a prodigy of greatness and humiliations, the object of God's rigors and tenderness. As a man He shall suffer beyond human expression; as a God He shall be glorified accordingly, and give infinite merits to His sufferings. This is the union of the justice and bounty of God, in the punishment and the forgiveness of sin. Man, finite in his person, could not satisfy for an infinite offence; he could not tie again the supernatural bonds which united him with his Creator, so God chose a victim of infinite merit. This victim is immolated, sin is expiated, the supernatural bonds are tied again, all men are saved, and all through Christ the Man-God, Who bore our sins, for "He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins." Amen.

SERMON XXXV.

THE REASONS FOR CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

God so loved the world as to give it His only Son. (John iii.—16.)

Since Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the promised Redeemer, came to save the world by taking upon Himself all its sins, is it not just that we, who share in His graces and blessings, should have an intimate knowledge of our Saviour, the source from which flows the fountain of divine grace from the Creator to the creature.

Jesus Christ is to our souls what the sun is to nature. If you were to remove the sun from its place in the heavens, all would be darkness and obscurity. The earth and her sister planets would be revolving tombs, the silence of death and the sadness of despair would reign supreme. Remove Christ from the souls of men, and nothing but hideous passions, revolting disorders and errors succeed. To know Christ is the greatest favor which

Heaven can bestow on men, for God can give us nothing more precious here below. The knowledge of Christ is the source of infinite happiness and the eternal joy of the saints ; and the great Apostle St. Paul desired only one favor from God : "To know Christ and Him crucified." (I. Cor. ii.—2.)

Let us this morning, brethren, consider the reasons for the Incarnation of Christ, and why He saw fit to choose the means of this mystery to work out the salvation of mankind.

Assuredly, brethren, God could save all men by a single word : He is all-powerful. From the multitude of other means which He could have chosen, He selected the Incarnation to show forth His love for men and satisfy for their sins in the measure of its enormity. So that the mystery of the Incarnation becomes the most adorable and perfect manifestation of God's perfection and love. It displays to us the knowledge of God, and particularly His justice, His hatred for sin, His love for men, His wisdom and His omnipotence.

Undoubtedly, brethren, the Incarnation reveals *the justice of God and His hatred for sin.* If God had saved man without sending His Son and without requiring a reparation equal to the offence, we would not have realized the greatness of sin and the repulsion which it inspires in the Almighty. The expiation which God requires from His own

Son—His death on the cross—in order to satisfy for the guilt of sin, is in itself a most convincing proof of the hatred God bears to it.

The mystery of the Incarnation makes us acquainted with the *love of God for men:* "He spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." (Rom. viii.—32.) "For God," says our Blessed Lord, "so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him." (John iii.—17.)

The wisdom of God shines forth most resplendently in this sacred mystery. Picture to yourselves fallen man, under the slavery of Satan, expelled from the Garden of Paradise, doomed to misery and death. Here is the execution of God's justice, but Bounty claims, nay, begs for mercy. I fancy, so to speak, in our human language, the mercy and justice of God pleading at the Bar of Heaven for guilty man. Mercy says: "Pardon, O Almighty! mercy for Adam and his posterity; destroy not forever the fairest work of Thy hand." And Justice replies: "This criminal who dares to rebel against Thee, who breaks Thy commandments, who becomes the willing slave of Satan, let him forever be associated with the fallen angels." Justice asks for man's condemnation, mercy for man's forgive-

ness. What will be the sentence of the Sovereign Judge? He will manifest His wisdom, reconcile His justice and His bounty in the Incarnation of His Divine Son—the Man-God. No wonder after this the Royal Prophet exclaims: "Mercy and truth have met each other, justice and peace have kissed." (Ps. lxxxiv.—11.) In repairing sin by His death, Christ satisfied the divine justice; in obtaining forgiveness for sinners converted by His grace, He satisfied the divine mercy. The wisdom of God in this union of the divine and human natures in the person of His Son, is admired still; because by it He has disarmed the devil, confounded the reputed wisdom of the world by the humiliations and death of His Son, and finally manifested, as St. Paul says, "that the apparent foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (I. Cor. i.—25.)

Finally, dear brethren, the mystery of the Incarnation gives us a clear conception *of God's omnipotence*. For, concerning this union of the divine with the human nature, which we call "hypostatic," and which is the masterpiece of divine power, the Holy Fathers of the Church teach this doctrine: "That the Son of God, Our Lord, perfect in His divinity as in His humanity, true God and true man, begotten before all ages by the Father according to divinity, and in time by the Blessed Virgin Mary according to humanity,

is one single person, Jesus Christ, Son of God, distinctly and indivisibly true God and true man." (Chal. iv.—45.) This hypostatic union proves the power of God. In descending to assume our nature, He lost none of His infinite majesty ; and not only did the Son of God take a soul like ours with its intelligence and free will, but a body like ours with its flesh and blood ; so that the passions and infirmities of both will cause the Man-God infinite suffering. In the assumption of our nature with all its infirmities, He raised our race to an infinite dignity ; because in drawing from humanity's blood the conqueror of hell, He called to the greatest honor infirmity and corruption. In a word, He has deified humanity.

Let us bow before the majesty of the hypostatic union, which, according to St. Thomas, " is the greatest of all unions." Let us admire the divine secrets—these mysteries of love, of wisdom, of omnipotence—which God in His infinite goodness shall reveal to us in the great light of eternity.

Amen.

SERMON XXXVI.

BENEFITS OF THE INCARNATION.

Wherefore when Christ cometh into the world He saith : Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not : but a body thou hast fitted for me. (Heb. x.—5.)

During the course of ages, dear brethren, from the creation of the human race to the coming of Christ, man attempted to satisfy the justice of God by sacrifices and oblations. Abel, Abraham Melchisedech offered sacrifices. In spirit, enter the temple of Jerusalem, and through the clouds of fragrant incense behold altars reddened with the blood of victims. But, brethren, these offerings were of no intrinsic value, for when Christ came into the world, He said : "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, O God."

But, brethren, if offerings of this nature were unable to effect reconciliation between God and man, who then will effect this much-desired-for want ? "Whom shalt thou send, O God, who shall come for us?" (Is. vi.—8.) "Here am I," an-

swers the Son of God, "send me, for a body thou hast fitted to me, O God." (Heb. x.—5.) And in taking that body the Son of God, equal in all things to His Father, placed Himself within the reach of man, who had become depraved by sin. Man, bound to the things of earth, was unable to elevate himself to God, Who is a pure spirit and dwells in heavenly light. By taking a body like ours in the Incarnation, God made Himself visible ; He dwelt among us and lived like one of us, so that His sacred humanity is the step that takes us nearer to God and affords us the advantage of acquiring some knowledge of His divinity. This is what St. John admirably expresses by the following words : "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life : for the life was manifested : and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us : that which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (I. John i.–1, 2 & 3.)

Again the Sacred Scriptures, in the Fourth Book of Kings, give us a striking image of compliance with the weaknesses of humanity. Eliseus the prophet went into a house one day and beheld a

child lying dead on his bed. At the mother's tears and supplications, he went into the room of death, and laying himself on the child, he put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he bowed himself upon him and returned him to life.

See the *first benefit* of the Incarnation, my brethren. The Son of God by casting Himself upon humanity, that is, by assuming its nature in the sublime mystery of the Incarnation, has brought us from the death of sleep to the life of grace. And in this divine Mediator, the Son of God, Who has become our brother, what a powerful intercessor and friend we find. He destroys the infinite distance which separates man from God. He appears to us like a giant touching two extremes—heaven and earth, time and eternity. With one hand receiving our petitions and with the other presenting them to God.

In the second place, the Incarnation gives us a model to copy. Bethlehem, Nazareth, will teach us how to suffer poverty and sanctify our work: they will teach us how to fast and to be faithful to prayer. The divine lessons of Christ recorded in the Gospels will point to us the vices which we must avoid and the virtues which we are bound to practice. Strengthened by Him, we shall mount the altar of self-sacrifice and understand that we must suffer patiently the trials of this life, forgive

our enemies and pray for our persecutors. Indeed this perfect model of Christ's sacred humanity is one of the greatest benefits of the Incarnation, but it is not all.

In the third place, I see in this mystery of the Son of God made man a powerful motive to induce us to practice the solid virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, by which we render due homage to the infinite majesty of God. In fact, brethren, are not the principal mysteries of Jesus Christ, particularly His glorious Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, the basis of our Faith? And when we see God giving us His Divine Son, can we not hope to have everything? "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath he not also, with Him, given us all things." (Rom. viii.—32.) Indeed, brethren, in considering the Incarnation, we may hope to be sons of God, sharers of His divine nature, heirs of the kingdom of Heaven, joint-heirs of Jesus Christ. Indeed, brethren, we may expect everything from the Son of God, Who became man for our salvation. Why should we not hope to become partakers of His divine nature when He assumed our humanity? Why should we not hope to be heirs of God, joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, when the Son of God is not ashamed to call us brethren? (Heb. iv.—11.) Can we waver in our aspirations when God has given us in the Incarna-

tion so generous and so powerful a Mediator ; for, exclaims St. Paul : "Who shall accuse the elect of God? God that justifieth. Who is he who shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea, that is risen again, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also worketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii.—33 & 34.)

But, in the last place, brethren, let us consider the Incarnation as the mystery of love. It is the greatest benefit showered upon man. In its contemplation we behold the infinite love of the Eternal Father for sinful man, in giving us His Divine Son as a propitiation for our sins. (I. John iv.—10.) "Let us therefore love God," says St. John, "because God hath loved us first." (I. John iv.—19.) The Incarnation teaches us to love our neighbor despite his faults and frailties. "My dearest," continues the same Apostle, "God hath so loved us ; we ought to love one another." (I. John iv.—11.) And I repeat the burning words of the Apostle of Charity which reveal the motive of this sublime manifestation of the Creator's love : "In this we haveknown the charity of God, because he hath laid down His life for us : and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (I. John iii.—16.) Amen.

SERMON XXXVII.

THE INCARNATION.

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke i.—35.)

Almighty God waited for four thousand years, brethren, before sending the promised Redeemer into the world. Why did He not give Him immediately after the fall of Adam? The Doctors of the Church answer that, if God had sent our Divine Saviour immediately after the fall of our first parents, they and their posterity would not have fully understood the wickedness of sin and the disastrous effects brought upon the human race by their original transgression.

After considering the disorders and crimes incidental to the idolatrous worship of pagan nations, we understand better the necessity of a Saviour; and the Blessed Trinity, in making us long after Him for so many centuries, made us feel the need

of a Redeemer and constrained us to appreciate His heaven-born visitation.

When the fulness of time was accomplished, God sent us His only-begotten Son. Thus has been fulfilled the great promise of the redemption.

First part. In order that heaven and earth might share in this great work, God chose a powerful spirit, the Archangel Gabriel, whose name means "strength of God," and gave him this order: "Go into a small city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin of the House of David espoused to a man whose name is Joseph, also of the royal line, and thou shalt reveal to her our will." And the Archangel, with lightning-like celerity, under the eyes of the Divine Majesty, came down to Nazareth, and in a humble cottage finds Mary, and communicates to her the will of heaven: "Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women." (Luke i.—28.) At this saying the virgin was troubled within herself and wondered at his saying: What manner of salutation this should be? (Luke i.—29.) Is it a snare, an illusion of the devil? But the angel quickly assures the humble virgin: "Fear not, Mary," he says, "for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and He shall be called the Son of

the Most High, and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of David, His father, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i.—30. & foll.) But the humble virgin, not being acquainted with the circumstances of its accomplishment, seems to decline this honor. "How shall this be done?" she says to the angel, "for I know not man." (Luke i.—34.) It means: how can this be done, since I have consecrated my virginity to God by an irrevocable vow. Then the archangel repeats the words which were dictated to him by the Blessed Trinity: "Fear not, Mary, thou shalt not become a mother like other women. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And as a proof of this, behold thy cousin Elizabeth; she also hath conceived a son in her old age; for these same laws of nature shall be suspended, but in a more marvelous and sublime manner: because no word is impossible with God." (Luke i.—35, 36 & 37.)

Then a penetrating ray from the Holy Ghost illuminated the soul of Mary. She saw the redemption of the human race from the powers of Satan, through her ministry, and answered the angelic messenger in accents of sublime faith: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to

me according to thy word." (Luke i.—38.) At the same instant was accomplished the adorable mystery of the Incarnation. By the power of the Holy Ghost, invisible, uncreated, the Son of God was conceived and made man.

Second part. Since, then, the Son of God was conceived and made man without the operation of the laws of nature, having St. Joseph as His foster-father, why do we say in the Apostles' Creed, that our Lord was conceived by the Holy Ghost. I would like to know if God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Who are but one and the same God, have formed the sacred Humanity of Christ in the chaste womb of Mary; I would like to know if the Incarnation is the work of the three divine persons. Assuredly, brethren, the three divine persons have wrought this mystery, for anything done by one exteriorly is also done by the same operation of the other divine persons. We say that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, because the Incarnation is the greatest prodigy of the love and of the bounty of God toward man, and that we attribute especially to the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and of the Son, the works of love and bounty, as we assign to the Father the works of power and to the Son the works of wisdom. In other words, brethren, it is because the works operated by the Trinity—those which go to

sanctify us—are specially ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and that the mystery of the Incarnation has no other aim than to bring men to a greater height of sanctity by snatching them from the power of Satan.

Besides, brethren, is it not the Holy Ghost Who, at the very instant that Christ was to take a human body, enlightened by His divine power, the humble virgin, making known to her the great blessings which would accrue to the human race from her acquiescence to the will of heaven? And was it not under this blessed inspiration of the Holy Ghost that Mary, illuminated, overwhelmed with the divine majesty, gave the consent desired by Heaven in order to carry out its designs? But it is not all, brethren; for assuredly, He Who unites in his person the divine with the human nature; Who from His mother's womb possesses an infinite wisdom, a boundless intelligence, in short—all the gifts of the Holy Ghost in their fullness and perfection, as St. Thomas says: "He whose human soul was adorned with all these gifts, as a sanctuary with flowers, at the very moment of His conception, even before the angel had left her in the humble home of Nazareth, can evidently be said 'to have been conceived by the Holy Ghost,' in the sense just explained and taught by the Apostles' Creed."

The fruits which we must gather for the benefit

of our souls from this mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God made man are to incarnate Jesus Christ in our hearts. We must live by His spirit, and practice the great virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, which will sanctify us, consequently save us. Was this not what St. Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians: "My little children, of whom I am in labor again until Christ be formed in you." (iv.—19.) This spiritual incarnation of Jesus Christ in you, brethren, will prove to be an inestimable happiness, for, says St. Augustine: "Mary felt happier in conceiving our Lord spiritually in her heart by Faith than in conceiving His adorable body." And this spiritual incarnation in ourselves, brethren, will be made by the power of the Holy Ghost; for, says the same Doctor: "The grace which formed Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary, forms also the Christian in the bosom of the Church; and the spirit which gave life to Christ, according to the flesh, shall also give us life in Him." Amen.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

Hail ! full of grace, the Lord is with thee. (Luke i. —28.)

We celebrate to-day, dear brethren the feast of the Annunciation, that is to say, the day on which the Angel Gabriel made known to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God. Four thousand years had come and gone since original sin and its blighting consequences had come upon the human race ; four thousand years of moral depression and painful expectation had passed away since the consoling promise had been made by the Lord that a woman was to be born and to crush the serpent's head. (Gen. iii.—15.)

At last the time, according to the expression of the Holy Scripture, had come ; the woman promised by God and foretold by the prophets, long expected by nations, was living, but unknown to the world, and she herself was unconscious of her glorious destiny, of her divine mission.

But since this mission is so glorious and divine,

will an angel be sent by the Lord into the royal city—Jerusalem—into the temple, the pride of the Holy City, into its very sanctuary, the Holy of Holies? No, brethren, God will send His angel, not into the midst of grandeur and magnificence, but to a poor, despised town called Nazareth, and to a pious virgin, the spouse of an unknown man, Joseph. The holy pair were earning their daily bread, although of the royal house of David.

But why was this done? Why was not some wealthy and privileged maiden selected for this stupendous work? For was she not to play a decisive part in the accomplishment of the mystery of our Redemption? Had she not been before her earthly birth from St. Ann and St. Joachim, nay, before the creation of the world, had she not been, by anticipation, present before the Blessed Trinity? (Prov. viii.—24.) Indeed this is so, brethren; but God, Who desired to be born in a poor stable, Who took upon Himself the appearance of a sinner, (2 Cor. v.—21) Who humbles the proud and exalts the humble, (James iv.—6) Who wanted to save the world from the abyss of pride and corruption into which it had fallen, beheld in Mary the two great virtues opposed to the world: *humility and purity;* and for this reason He chose her to be His Mother. He chose the *pure* virgin who consecrated her virginity to Him at the age of three years; He chose the *humble* virgin who in

the temple wished to be every one's servant: the pure and humble virgin who, night and day, according to the testimony of St. Ambrose, after reading in the Holy Scripture of the future Redemption of man, prayed God to grant her the supreme favor of becoming the servant of her whom He would choose for His mother.

Yes, God chose her who trembled in holy fear at the salutation of the angel: "Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." He chose the virgin who feared the mysterious import of the words: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bear a Son Who shall be great and Who shall be called the Son of the Most High." (Luke i.—31 & 32) and who replied: "How shall this be done, for I know not man." (Luke i.—34.) Yes, brethren, God chose this pure and humble virgin, whose humility, when her purity was safeguarded by the assurance of the angel, rendered her consent to the designs of the Most High. Knowing that by God's power she could become a mother, still remaining a virgin, because nothing is impossible with God (Luke i.—37) she exclaimed in accents of burning love and sublime humility: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word." (Luke i.—38.) These words accomplished the mystery of the Incarnation, and a God assumed our fallen nature.

These two virtues, purity and humility, so pleasing to the Blessed Trinity, which are found in the Blessed Virgin, tell us that Mary was fit to become the second Eve ; that is to say, fit to repair the crimes caused by the first Eve. Let us picture to our minds the circumstances which accompany the downfall of man under Eve, and his restoration to the favor of Heaven under Mary, and we shall be convinced that Mary was worthy to participate in this glorious work of divine mercy. In the Garden of Paradise the work of man's sedition was begun by Eve ; at Nazareth, the work of our redemption by Mary. Eve, idle and curious, believed in the seducing promises of the devil, that she would know as much as God, (Gen. iii.—5) because it flattered her vanity ; Mary, living in solitude, passing her days in work and prayer, feared the promise of the Archangel, and her humility became more deeply founded. The first Eve fell lower, because she wished to exalt herself, she wanted to become equal to God ; (Gen. iii.—5) and she was punished by becoming the slave of the devil. The other—the second Eve—said that she was simply the handmaid of the Lord, the humble and pure servant of God, and she was rewarded by becoming the Queen of Heaven and Earth, of angels and of men.

These are the two Eves. One was the mother of the living, according to the body ; the other

became the mother of the living, according to grace. "All that Eve lost," says Tertullian, "in believing the lies of the devil, Mary gained in hearkening to the voice of the angel."

Let us become followers of the second Eve and not followers of the first in her pride and sin. The Annunciation is one of the most beautiful feasts of Mary. Let us partake of her joy. The Church banishes her sadness to-day, and bids us rejoice with Mary in this feast of her exaltation. When we recite the "Hail Mary," we recall to our minds the great mystery of the Incarnation, with which the Annunciation is indispensably united. Let us often repeat this beautiful prayer, which was composed under the inspiration of God Himself by the angel; and while paying homage to our Blessed Lady, to animate and keep alive in our hearts lively sentiments of devotion and faith: "Hail! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus."

Amen.

SERMON XXXIX.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

And thou, Bethlehem, art a little one among the thousands of Juda : out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler of Israel : and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity. (Mich. v.—2.)

According to this prophecy, the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. But as the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph lived in Nazareth, how could the prophecy be fulfilled and the word of God prove to be true ? God, Who holds in His hands the hearts of His creatures and Who uses them as the means of attaining His end and carrying out His plans, placed in the heart of Augustus Cæsar the desire of knowing the number of his subjects. " This enrolling," says St. Luke, " was first made by Cyrinas, the governor of Syria, and as the Jews were under the Roman domination, all went to be enrolled, every one unto his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth

into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with Child." (Luke ii. —1-6.)

As we see, brethren, God made use of the pride of an emperor to give to the world an authentic and official testimony that the Messiah, Who was to save and rule the world, was born in Bethlehem, according to the divine promise made by the prophets. The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph started on their way to Bethlehem, where they arrived at the fall of night. And it came to pass while they were there her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. They went from door to door begging for a shelter on that cold December night, but finding none, refused everywhere, they sought refuge in a poor stable on the outskirts of the town. This is the palace which God assigns to the Saviour of the world, His only Son. The parents prepared a cradle filled with straw, and the Blessed Virgin, without pain, which is the chastisement of sin, without breaking the seal of her virginity, brought forth her Son, wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. (Luke ii.—7.)

Consider, brethren, the Child-God on this poor throne, recalling to our minds the most touching mystery of our Faith. A God enters, like our-

selves, a human family ; a God carries in His veins the blood of sinful humanity ; a God appears to generations as a weak, poor, feeble and helpless child in a manger. It seems that the lowliness of His birth is beneath His dignity as a God ; but, no, brethren, for nothing so much as the charity and love of a God, Who came to expiate and heal our pride, our love for comfort, our aversion for suffering, could be more befitting for such a cure. How beautiful He appears in His infirmities ! He conquers all hearts, and while in silent adoration the Virgin and St. Joseph bow before the new born king, His sovereign power begins to receive its adorations upon earth. " For behold an angel of the Lord stood by the shepherds, and the brightness of God shone around them, and the angel said to them : ' I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign to you. You shall find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God, and saying : ' Glory to God in the highest : and on earth peace to men of good-will.' And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another : ' Let us go to Bethlehem and let us see this Word that is come to pass which the

Lord hath showed to us.' And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in a manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning the Child. And all that heard wondered: and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. And the shepherds returned, glorifying God for all the things they had heard and seen." (Luke ii.—9-20.)

What precious lessons are to be found, brethren, in the adorations of these shepherds! Has not the Lord become a refuge for the poor? (Ps. ix.—10.) His kindness has been manifested to them even before His crucifixion, in calling them to adore Him. We dread poverty. An excessive love of wealth and riches and comfort prevailed in the time of Christ as it prevails nowadays. How many unfortunate men, having lost all hope of becoming rich, are restive, dissatisfied and unhappy! Why is this? Because they seek happiness where it is not to be found. They may strive to subvert society by useless agitation, but they will not find the solution of the problem which perplexes them. Christ, brethren, is the only one who has ever given this problem the only answer that can give peace to humanity. From the stable where He was born, from the manger in which He was laid, He condemns the mere earthly aspirations of the soul which runs after the empty phantom of gain.

The Church invites you to-day, brethren: "Behold," she says, "the Spouse cometh; let us go forth to meet Him." (Matt. xxv.—6.) Yes, come all of you, poor and unfortunate, to meet the Babe of Bethlehem, born in a stable, to be your consolation and happiness here below. Come, ye steeped in sin, and meet Christ born for your salvation. Let us go to Bethlehem, let us see the Word, which the Lord hath showed us. There we will open our hearts to Him, we will find room for Him, for He comes to destroy sin in our hearts and to reign in them by His grace.

Let us never forget the sublime lessons of the crib of Bethlehem; let them pervade our whole lives, and like a sweet perfume, cast around us the good odor of Jesus Christ, in order that we may ever love and serve our Lord and Master, Who on Christmas night was born for us all. Amen.

SERMON XL.

CHRISTMAS.

A Child is born to us. A Son is given to us (Isaias ix.—6.)

"While all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty word leapt down from heaven, Thy royal throne." (Wisdom xviii.—14.) "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will." (Luke ii.—14.) Glory to His *love for men;* glory for His *divine teachings,* for this Child Who is born to us, this Son Who is given to us, wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, (Luke ii.—12) comes to bring salvation to men of good-will and teach them the way which leads there unto.

1. On this Christmas morning our hearts must be overwhelmed with joy in considering that God is no longer angry with us, since He so closely unites Himself to our nature; that God is no longer far from us, since He becomes a man; that God longs to draw us to Him, since He becomes a little child.

Indeed, He comes not like a powerful king or a severe judge: but as a little infant, so as not to frighten us by His power and justice. It is not, indeed, the justice and majesty, the splendor and grandeur of a God which strike our eyes and win our hearts, before the manger where the Holy Child summons us to-day, but it is the humility and bounty of a God personified in a poor, helpless and weak little infant. Hearken, then, dear brethren, to the call of your God. Do not say, like the guilty Adam in Paradise: "I heard Thy voice, O Lord, and I was afraid." (Gen. iii.—10.) Be not afraid, for it is the wailing of a little child, and if He be angered against you by your sins, an act of love, a tear of repentance, a sincere confession will appease Him and make Him forget your transgressions. "A Son is given to us, a Child is born to us."

Truly God could not express in plainer words by His prophet that this Son, this Child, belongs to us, and that consequently we must banish all fear from our hearts and fill them with love, as we would for one of our children. In fact, how could He imprint more deeply upon the hearts of men that one great commandment which is the summing up of the whole law, "Love God above all things and thy neighbor as thyself," (Luke x. —27) than by becoming a child who is especially born for us, a child who is given to us in a special

manner. Indeed, He could not, brethren, for the Child, by the beauty of His smile, the brilliancy of His eyes, the innocence of His soul, possesses irresistible charms which captivate all hearts. Who has not in his weary hours sought calm and quietude from the cares and deceptions of life in the company of little children? Indeed, Christ was right when He said, the kingdom of Heaven is like unto them, and that we cannot enter it unless we become as children. (Matt. xviii.—3.) Well, brethren, on this Christmas morning, with all the powers of His soul, with all the love of His heart, the Babe of Bethlehem invites you all men of good-will to seek in Him peace, happiness and salvation.

2. Besides, brethren, from the manger of Bethlehem, the Child Jesus teaches us the way to heaven, the way of humility and self-denial. He who set His tabernacle in the sun, (Ps. xviii.—6) could assuredly find a shelter in an inn of a small town; He could be born in the palace of a Herod or a Cæsar, because the whole world belongs to Him. But He preferred the poverty of a poor stable to the splendor of a palace, the discomforts and privations of the stable to the luxuries and riches of worldly rank, the adorations and homages of the poor and ignorant shepherds to the adulations of the rich and powerful. And no wonder, brethren; for how could He bring consolation and re-

lief to suffering humanity and fight the corruption of the world, if He were born in the midst of worldly splendors ; how could the poor, the forsaken, the sinner, hope in Him and understand Him if He did not appear like one of them?

Truly the lowliness of His birth is a condemnation of the avarice and sensuality, of the selfishness and pride of the great, as it is the glorification of the poverty and suffering of the little one, of the forsaken, of the meek and humble of heart. Bethlehem is the school of humility and self-denial.

Listen to the teachings given there, men of good-will ; you will not only enjoy peace upon earth, but happiness in heaven.

I cannot help remarking, in conclusion, the resemblance between the lowly birth of Christ and His shameful death on the Cross. We wrap in the same manner the new born and the dead, and it seems, according to Tertullian, "that in His swaddling clothes the Child tries, as it were, beforehand, His winding sheet." Yes, for He Who possesses the fullness of science, could say while His Mother wrapped Him up: "I accept these bonds as the symbol of My being tied down as a thief in My passion, as the symbol of My being wrapped in a winding sheet at My burial. Yes, I accept these bonds, because they shall be salutary ligatures for suffering humanity, for they shall set it free from the bondage of hell."

Disciples of the poor, suffering and humble Child-God, let our pity be for our suffering brethren : and may He Whose Nativity we celebrate in rejoicing, make you and them the recipients of His choicest graces and blessings, and thus obtain the salvation which this Child born to us is bringing to all men of good-will. Amen.

SERMON XLI.

FEAST OF THE PATRONAGE.

Mary, our patroness, pray for us!

Our Blessed Lord took an especial delight in showering upon Mary, His Virgin Mother, the richest treasures of grace which His Sacred Heart contained. The Holy Ghost, her pure Spouse, has ever inspired the Church to proclaim and make known the innate grandeurs and august titles of Mary. This constant outburst of ardent devotion toward the Mother of God, elevated to that dignity and glory which places her above all created beings, is a fitting tribute of the Church and her devoted children to the praise of her who is in truth

"Our tainted Nature's solitary boast."

The Blessed Virgin is indeed our patroness. She is our refuge in the time of temptation and tribulation; but I will speak this morning upon her title as patroness of all Christians.

In the first place, let us consider the excellence of the institution of this feast. Now, this feast refers

in a most particular manner to the sublime plan of our Redemption. Non-Catholics and especially many Protestant sects look upon our Blessed Lady as an ordinary woman, and refuse to accept the faith of the Church in believing in the intercession of Mary, under the pretence of keeping inviolated the mediation of our Lord. Truly, according to a divine prediction, the devil ever seeks to bite the heel of the woman who crushed his head. (Gen. iii. —15.) For, brethren, we must be blind if we do not see the necessity of this beautiful and touching feast of the patronage of Mary. It is impossible that Mary, who was intimately connected with our Lord in the redemption of man, could ever forget to plead for fallen humanity at the throne of grace. Besides, the work of our Redemption is not yet completed ; it will be completed only when, the actual world being destroyed or renewed, there will not be a soul left on earth to participate in the merits of the Blood of Jesus Christ. Up to that time, the Blessed Virgin will perform the duties of Patroness towards the Church suffering and militant. This office she accepted at the foot of the Cross from the dying accents of Jesus Christ. (John xix.—27.) The Blessed Virgin must then watch over us and extend to us her protection, so that our eternal enemy may not get control over our souls and thus frustrate the designs of God towards us.

In the second place, let us consider the power of the Blessed Virgin which is naturally shown in the institution of this feast.

The Church solemnly and officially proclaimed St. Joseph the Patron of the Universal Church, because he was the Foster-father of Christ, and during His infancy watched over Him and protected Him. By a natural consequence, the love which he had for the Child-God he extends to the whole Church, which is nothing else but the mystical body of the Word made flesh. Indeed, brethren, the ministry of St. Joseph was important, but less important than that of Mary's. So that we must admit that Mary extends a protection commensurate with Her dignity. We cannot hesitate for a moment in admitting that the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of our souls, is our first patroness, and that she protects the Church as well as ourselves.

You may say that this title of patroness derogates against the dignity of Christ, the one Mediator. I say no, brethren; Christ obeyed His parents while on earth, (Luke ii.—51) without derogation ; I do not see why He would not hear the supplications of His mother, now that He is in heavenly glory, especially when we look upon Mary as a mediatrix near the one Mediator. "The honor due to Christ," says Suarez, "must not prevent us from having recourse to the Blessed Virgin ; because when we

pray to her, we ask for nothing else than her intercession, making up for our weakness and unworthiness." (3d pt. St. T. Q. 37.) St. Peter Damian, speaking of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, says to her: "The Almighty hath done great things to Thee ; (Luke i.—49) all power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth. Nothing is impossible to thee, who can excite in hardened heart, the desire of eternal happiness. How can the divine power be opposed to thee, when He took flesh in Thy Virginal Womb. Indeed, thou cometh near the altar of reconciliation and peace, not in beseeching, but in commanding." (Sermo. de Nat. Mariae.) Again Suarez says: "If we suppose for a moment that a request made by the Blessed Virgin is rejected by all the heavenly court ; if an angel, as Daniel says, be in opposition to another angel, the prayer of the Blessed Virgin would have more power and more strength than the prayers of all the saints." (3d pt. St. T.)

These opinions sum up the general expression of the confidence of the Fathers of the Church in every age, in the powerful intercession of Mary and of the efficacy of her patronage.

Finally, I will say, let us have an unbounded confidence in the patronage of our Blessed Lady. She is our mother in very truth. She loves us more earnestly than our earthly mothers ; this is saying much. She loves with a love not so in-

tense as that of Jesus Christ, for Christ is God; but she loves as one who knows the full value of the blood which was shed for our salvation. Let us correspond to the wishes of the Church, which has established so many beautiful feasts in her honor, and following in the footsteps of the illustrious Benedict XIV., who instituted the Feast of the Patronage of Mary, address her in these words of simple faith: "Mary our patroness, pray for us!" Amen.

SERMON XLII.

MARY, PATRONESS OF CHRISTIANS.

O Mary, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

The founder of Rome, dear brethren, desiring to place his city on a firm basis, based it upon the mutual union of the rich and of the poor.

To the rich he said : " Those among the poor whom you like, help them by your cooperation and shelter them with your power. They shall be your clients."

To the poor he said : " Link your weakness to the fortune of the rich and powerful. Give them gratitude and devotion, and they shall protect you."

The orders of the founder were obeyed. The patronage was established. Indeed, brethren, it was an admirable institution, since it constituted the strength of Rome for a long time. No force is stronger among nations than this unity The head can act and produce with all the power of the members, and the members with all the precision of the head. The head gives life and mul-

tiplies the acts of the members. Now any nation that does not possess this great bond of unity is speedily doomed to disintegration and premature decay.

Menenius Agrippa, in a very striking apologue, made this salient fact known to the Roman people when they were rebelling against the power of the rich. "Once," he says, "the organs, tired of working solely to feed the stomach, rebelled against it. 'Why,' said they among themselves, 'shall we toil to support this lazy gentleman who is getting fat at our expense and labor? It is time to stop.' So the feet refused to walk, the arms to move and the teeth to masticate. For a time all is well; but later on weakness and exhaustion came; the organs decided to resume their normal functions, but it was too late. In trying to harm the stomach, they harmed themselves, and the body fell into a state of decomposition."

Societies, brethren, are also bodies composed of different organs. For good work, a subordination of parts is necessary. What would happen if the less favored would stop work suddenly, ask the powerful the reason of their privileges? The social fabric would be destroyed and anarchy would be the result. Obedience of the weak to the powerful, of the poor to the rich, is necessary, while the rich and powerful protect the others and distribute to them the treasures of life and strength,

which is the result of the common labor. This law, which is nothing else but the law of patronage, the law of life and strength, is to be found in the Church of God, which has been made prefect by divine wisdom.

We see it clearly in this beautiful dogma of the Communion of Saints. In heaven, the saints, victorious heroes over the empire of sin and death, bask in the sunshine of God's adorable presence ; in purgatory, the souls still bearing the scars of the fierce encounter eagerly awaiting the joyful day of deliverance ; on earth, the militant Church still waging war against the enemies of salvation,— all assisting one another : because they are bound together by the golden bonds of Charity.

The saints, forever free from the danger of falling into sin, confirmed in grace, beseech God to inspire their fellow soldiers with courage and give them victory, while they themselves, in the midst of their struggles, offer their prayers and good works for the freedom of their brethren, who languish in purgatorial fire. Thus, brethren, the three armies, in heaven, in purgatory and on earth, are marching toward the citadel of their God, under the banner of patronage.

But we must remember that every soldier in the army of Christ on earth is not a hero. Unfortunately, deserters, cowards, renegades, are to be found in it. It is on account of them that the

Passion of Christ Jesus pleads for the necessary graces which will enable them to become valiant soldiers of the Lord. But this voice, pleading for guilty man, because it is the voice of suffering and love, frightens him. Through shame or despair he does not want to hear it or fear it. So, under Christ—"for there is only One Mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ"—(I. Tim. ii.—5) God placed an advocate of sinners, all-powerful in heaven and on earth, because she is the Mother of Christ and of men at the same time. She is entrusted with the sublime office of Patroness of Christians before the throne of God. The ship-wrecked do not fear her; they know she is the star of salvation. The most ungrateful approach her throne with confidence. "Why do we give her the title of Refuge of Sinners," says St. Bernard, "if we were to do her an injury and refuse to come to her? Read the Gospels, and if you find a word not expressing mercy about Mary, then I will allow you to fear. But, no, there is nothing of the kind about her! Wipe your tears, you who are in tribulation; you who are fearful, take courage; the powerful virgin, who is the Mother of your Judge and of your God, is also the advocate of the human race."

Let us, brethren, beg our Patroness to intercede for us. She will obtain for us many inestimable graces. She is our Patroness. A patroness means

also a model. She is our Model. We must strive then to adorn our hearts with the virtues which adorned hers. In doing so, we shall please her who, in her exalted dignity as Patroness of all Christians, loves us with a most tender love, and earnestly desires to see us among the number of the elect. O Mary, Patroness of Christians and Refuge of Sinners, pray for us now, and at the hour of our death! Amen.

SERMON XLIII.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

Christ Jesus was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promise made unto the fathers. (Rom. xv.—8.)

Dear brethren, the people of God, the Jews, were to bring forth the expected Redeemer. Abraham was the father of that chosen and privileged nation, and circumcision was the sign given by God by which He recognized his descendants and protected them in a very special manner: "I will establish," He says, "My covenant between Me and thee, and between thy seed after thee in their generations, by a perpetual covenant....And this is My covenant which you shall observe, between Me and you and thy seed after thee! All the male-kind of you shall be circumcised, the flesh of your foreskin, that it may be for a sign of My covenant. An infant of eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations....The male whose flesh of his foreskin shall not be circumcised, that soul shall be

destroyed out of the people, because he hath broken My covenant." (Gen. xvii.—7, 10 & foll.)

The law of circumcision bore a political sign, separating the Jews from the other nations, but it had also a religious signification. The Redeemer was to come forth from the seed of Abraham, hence the circumcision was a profession of faith in the future Redeemer. Circumcision was the figure of Baptism. It did not confer grace, for, according to the Council of Florence, in a decree to the Armenians, "the sacraments of the Old Law did not give grace, but were only a figure that it was to be given only by the merits of Christ, while the sacraments of the New Law give grace to those who receive them worthily." For this reason St. Paul calls them weak and needy elements. (Gal. iv.—9.)

It is evident that the Messiah Who was to be born of the people of God, of the people of circumcision, according to the promises made unto the fathers by God Himself, had to perform His office and ministry toward His own people, that is to say, be circumcised. "Christ Jesus was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promise made to the fathers." (Rom. xv.—8.) For this reason, eight days after His birth, Christ shed His blood under the knife of circumcision, and as in our ceremony of Baptism every child receives a name, in the ceremony of circum-

cision Christ received the name of Jesus, that is to say, Saviour. This name was given to Him by an angel before His conception, (Luke ii.—21) in order to affirm His rights, as the Redeemer, over the human race.

Assuredly, Christ did not need circumcision, because being free from sin, He needed not to bear the sign of it ; but as He says : "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it," (Matt. v.—17) He submitted Himself to the requirements of a law which was necessary until He brought it to a greater perfection. Besides, St. Thomas says : "Christ was circumcised for several reasons: He wanted to show that His body was really a human body, and not merely one in appearance ; He wanted to teach us the great virtue of obedience, by submitting Himself to a law intended to heal the sins of the flesh ; and finally, He wanted to free others from the burden of the law by taking it upon Himself, according to the doctrine of St. Paul : 'God sent His Son, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law.' " (Gal. iv.—4 & 5.)

Indeed, brethren, it was characteristic of the love of the Saviour to submit Himself to a law intended to save sinful humanity. Man lost heaven by pride and disobedience. Jesus Christ restores it to him by humility and obedience. In obeying this law, Christ redeemed us from circumcision,

gained grace for us, which we receive through the channels of the Sacraments, three of which imprint on our souls a character, or spiritual mark, destined to remain forever.

Circumcision was the cutting off of the foreskin, a painful operation in which blood was shed. Christ in His infant state begins to shed His blood for us. Let us ask Him for the grace to be circumcised spiritualiy, that is to say, to cut off all pride, false ambition, worldly pleasures ; in a word, all concupiscence and superfluous thoughts from our hearts.

As the Circumcision of Our Lord falls on New Year's Day, let us remember the three-fold duty which we have to perform to-day. First, to thank God for all the graces bestowed upon us during the preceding year ; second, to beg His pardon for all the sins which we have committed during it and all the years of our lives ; third, to implore the grace to employ properly every moment of the year about to begin.

Let us promise Our Lord on this day when He first shed His blood, to practise penance and mortification ; let us promise to reverence His Holy Name, remembering that " this name is above all names ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth " ; (Philip ii.—9 & 10.) " that there is no other name under heaven given to men

whereby we must be saved ;" (Acts iv.—12) and resolve to circumcise all that is opposed to the reign of Jesus in our hearts. Amen.

SERMON XLIV.

THE EPIPHANY OR MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST.

We saw His glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John i.—14.)

The Church celebrates to-day, brethren, the feast of the Epiphany, which means the manifestation of Christ. In fact, the Redeemer made Himself known—manifested Himself before He entered upon His public life on different occasions. So to-day, brethren, the Church commemorates three divine manifestations of Our Blessed Lord.

First, Christ manifested Himself to the Magi: "Behold," says St. Matthew, "there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him." (Matt. ii.—2.) "And having received the answer from Herod that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, they went their way. The star which they had seen in the East went before them, until

it came and stood over where the Child was. And entering the house, they found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him ; and opening their treasures they offered Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." (Matt. ii.—11.) Thus the prophecy of Isaias, " All they from Saba shall come bringing gold and frankincense : and showing praise to the Lord," (Is. lx. —6) as well as the prophecy of David, " The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents : the king of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts," (Ps. lxxi.—10) was fulfilled to the letter.

But Christ, Who was manifested to men as a God by the miraculous star, wanted also to appear as a man, in order to try the faith of these kings, who were to be afterwards the Christian fathers of the Gentiles. For this reason the kings of the East, on entering the stable where Christ was, found the Virgin Mother presenting a poor little Child. But their faith stood the test. Kneeling before Him in silent adoration, they offered Him myrrh, a symbol of their belief in His Incarnation, as it foretold His death and burial ; frankincense, which is only burned before the altar of God, as a belief in His divinity ; and gold, to proclaim His universal royalty and reign over the whole world by His sacrifice and love.

Secondly, the Church commemorates also to-day the Baptism of Christ by St. John in the River Jordan, where He received a testimony of His divinity, when the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the spirit of God descend as a dove and come upon Him. Behold a voice from heaven was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii.—17.) No wonder the Eternal Father was pleased in His Divine Son, Who is the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance. (Heb. i.—3.) The Father recognizes Himself in this beloved Son, Who is among sinners and receives the baptism of penance. What a beautiful manifestation of our Lord's divine filiation!

Thirdly, the Church recalls to us to-day the first miracle of Christ, (John ii.—11) which was wrought at the wedding feast of Cana to sanctify the marriage union. The miracles of Christ proved His divinity, and as this first miracle was the first personal manifestation of His power and divinity to men, the Church mentions it to-day, together with the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, by the miraculous star, and with the Baptism of Christ by John, when the heavens were opened and a voice from heaven was heard acknowledging Him as the Son of God. Truly, after these manifestations of our Lord, we can exclaim with St. John: "We saw His glory, the glory of the only-

begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John i.—14.)

The Church pays most particular attention to the conversion of the Magi, because they were the first converted to the faith among the pagans, our ancestors. And this day should be for us one of thanksgiving for our calling to Christianity. For how many unfortunate nations are still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. (Ps. cvi.—10.) We ought to say with St. Augustine: "Truly, O Lord! thou art my God Who hast called me to Thy wonderful light. I give Thee thanks for having enlightened me."

Offer presents, brethren, to the new-born King, offer myrrh, frankincense and gold; that is to say, Faith, Hope and Charity. Let Him be the ruler of our souls, for He is the guiding star of humanity. Let us hope, let us love, let us believe, for faith leads us to Jesus, and He leads us to heaven, where a clear vision of the beauty and glory of God shall replace the obscure knowledge which we have now of His divine perfections. Let us ask the Child-God for that grace in the language of the Church: "O God! Who hath shown today Thy only Son to the Gentiles, led by a miraculous star; in Thy bounty, though we already know Thee by faith, let it be granted that we may one day contemplate the splendors of Thy glory, through the same Christ our Lord." Amen.

SERMON XLV.

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

The name of Jesus is a name above all names. (Philip ii.—9.)

The Prophet Isaias calls the coming Messiah "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "God the Mighty," the "Prince of Peace," and "Father of the world to come." (Is. ix.—6.) Of course all these names are befitting Christ, because He has been wonderful in His birth, a counsellor in His teachings, a God in His works, mighty in His passion, Father of the world to come in His resurrection, and Prince of peace in heaven; but these names do not include all the attributes of Christ, while the name of Jesus does, and it is for this reason that it is the name above all other names. (Philip ii.—9.)

The name of Jesus is full of sweetness, of light, of life and power. "Thy name," said Solomon, undoubtedly referring to the name of Jesus, "is as oil poured out." (Cant. i.—2.) "Why," says St. Bernard, "is the name of Jesus compared with oil poured out?" "Because," he answers, "as the oil is used to light, to feed the body and to

heal wounds, the holy name of Jesus lights when it is preached, it feeds when it is thought over, it heals when it is invoked."

And truly, brethren, the faith of the world is due to the *light* which sprang forth from the name of Jesus. The glory of this name is so refulgent that it shone as a star to the Eastern kings ; (Matt. ii.—1) that the night is passed and the day is at hand ; (Rom. xiii.—12) that those who believe in its potency, far from sitting in darkness, are now light in the Lord. (Eph. v.—8.) This light illuminated 5,000 persons when Peter preached Jesus Christ. (Acts iv.—4.)

Not only is this holy name a light, but it is a food which *feeds* the soul and keeps her in the state of grace. "For if we fight against the devil in the name of Jesus," says St. Justin, "Jesus will fight for us, with us, and in us, and the enemy will flee as soon as he hears the name of Jesus."

Finally, the name of Jesus is *all-powerful*. To be convinced of the truth of this, you have only to recall the incident of the lame man seated at the gate of the temple, and healed by St. Peter at its mere invocation. Peter said : "Silver and gold have I none : but what I have I give thee : in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk. And he leaping up stood, and walked." (Acts iii. —6.) Has not our Blessed Lord Himself said : "In My name they shall cast out devils ; they

shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. —18.)

The Sacred Scriptures say that the name of Jesus is as oil poured out, for if the oil was not poured out it would have no effect. The oil must be poured into the lamp in order to light it, taken into the stomach in order to feed it, and spread over the wound in order to heal it. Thus the grace of God, which we receive through the merits of Jesus Christ, in the sacraments administered in His name, must be spread over our souls in order to sanctify them. Who then can murmur in spiritual desolation when besieged by the demons, since he has the power of the name of Jesus to strengthen, fortify and sanctify himself ?

In conclusion, brethren, I will ask you to pronounce the holy name always with the greatest respect and devotion, remembering that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth ; (Philip ii.—10) remembering also that it is a holy and terrible name ; (Ps. cx.—9) that at its mention the angels bow in reverence and hell trembles. Continue to show your respect for it in bowing at its invocation. Holy Church has granted an indulgence of 20 days for each time this is done,

and a plenary indulgence when invoked at the supreme moment of death. Bear a great love for this holy name. The name of Jesus is the name of the One who loved us so much as to leave the splendors of His Father's home and come on earth to redeem sinful man. We should invoke this name with confidence. Our Blessed Lord said : "Amen, Amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." (John xvi.—23.) Then have recourse to the holy name in every necessity ; in danger, cry out with St. Peter : "Save us, Lord, we perish." (Matt. viii. —25.) "Let the children of darkness trust in chariots or in horses," says the Psalmist, "but we will call on the name of the Lord, our God, (Ps. xix.—8) for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we shall find salvation." (Rom. x.—13 ; Acts ii.—21 and iv.—12.)

Let us pray that it may be loved and honored over the entire world. Let all our actions begin with this holy name, according to the advice of the Apostle : "All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," (Col. iii.—17) so that having reverenced, loved, and invoked this symbol of salvation during life, we may find inexpressible sweetness in it at the hour of death. Amen.

SERMON XLVI.

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

And His name was called Jesus. (Luke ii.—21.)

The Church invites us to-day, brethren, to come before the cradle of the Saviour of the world, and there exhorts us to bless and thank Him under the name of Jesus ; for, says the Scripture, "After eight days were accomplished that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was given Him by an angel before He was conceived in the womb." (Luke ii.—21.)

It is with great joy that we come before the crib and celebrate the feast of the Holy Name, "for there is no other name under heaven given men, whereby we must be saved," says St. Paul. (Acts iv.—12.)

But why should the whole earth leap for joy in hearing this holy name? Why should it be reverenced in the Church, adored in heaven, feared in hell—for it is written that at this name every knee should bow of those that are in heaven,

on earth and under the earth—(Philip ii.—10) if not because it is the name of the Liberator promised to our first parents after the fall ; if not because it is the name of the Son of God made man ; if not because it is the name of the One Who comes to save our souls, to repair the ruin caused by sin to our nature, and to open to us the gates of salvation and of everlasting life ? Then let us endeavor to acquire a thorough knowledge of Jesus, and in order to do so let us make a few reflections inspired by His holy name.

The name of Jesus is synonymous of love, for it means Saviour, and He saved us through love. But how can we know the love which Jesus bears us ? By comparisons, brethren. Jesus is eternal love, and consequently the Man-God is known by a love entirely different from that of creatures. Inasmuch the love of creatures is interested, blind and selfish, the love of Jesus is disinterested, clear-sighted and generous. A few considerations on these parallels will prove my assertion.

First of all, human love is interested. St. Bernard says "that it needs a cause or an effect." So a person loves another, because His love is reciprocated ; then there is a cause—thankfulness and gratitude ; or a person loves another for the pleasure of being loved, then there is an effect—selfishness, self-gratification, pride satisfied. This is

human love. But the love of a person devoid of charms, destitute of gracefulness or of any other attraction, to love for love itself—this is the true, the generous, the disinterested love which Jesus has for humanity, and His life is a proof of it. The poor, the infirm, the destitute, the forsaken or despised—all those from whom He cannot expect anything are those whom He seeks. He wants to resemble them in the lowliness of His birth at Bethlehem, in His labors and privations at Nazareth. The first words of His public life are for them : " Blessed are the poor ; blessed are they that suffer and mourn, for they shall be comforted ;" (Matt. v.—5) adding also, " Blessed are the merciful." Thus in teaching the poor to love their poverty, and the rich to be merciful, not only does Jesus Christ show His disinterested and unselfish love ; but that this divine fire taken from heaven by Him was ever leading Him to teach men to love one another and live as brothers. Today the world, undermined by unrestrained selfishness and material interest, is ready to stain the earth with human blood. What is the remedy ? Thoughtful men have tried to destroy this accursed spirit of greed, but their efforts have been vain. The only way of wiping out war, hatred or discord from the face of the earth is to beseech the Prince of Peace, Jesus, the Saviour, Who blessed the peacemakers, to change the hearts of men,

so that love for humanity be stronger in their hearts than the love for the perishable wealth of this world; and God alone, brethren, God Who died, without any compensation, through love for the salvation of men, can teach men to devote themselves for the welfare of their fellow-creatures.

Secondly, brethren, human love is blind. The ancient writers always represented love under the form of a child whose eyes were blindfolded.

How many things or persons are there in this world whom we would love or hate if we were to know them better. Our love is generally in the imagination and not in the intellect. In this world they are ungrateful, they appear to us grateful; in this world they are hypocrites and traitors, they appear to us faithful and true; in this world they are enemies, they appear to us friends. Well, brethren, to love an enemy, because we think him to be a friend; to love an ungrateful, a hypocrite or a traitor, because we think him to be grateful, faithful and true, is not a great love—but a great blindness. The love of Jesus is very different. He knows us just as we are, and still He loves us unto the end. (John xiii.—1.) He loves us in spite of our ingratitude, our perversity, and our sinfulness. He loved His own as they were in the world; (John xiii.—1) He knew that, like Judas, we would betray Him, (John xiii.—1) and still He

is ready to forgive us ; for when as yet we were sinners, Christ was ready to die for us. (Rom. v. —8 & 9.)

Finally, brethren, we might say that human love is generous. Some men have given their lives for those they have loved, but if we examine their actions a little closer we find that their love was not completely disinterested. If they knew that their love would lead them to death, they probably would never have given way to it. Therefore, brethren, the true lover, the one worthy of that name, is not so much the one who dies from the result of his love, but the one who, knowing at the outset that his love would lead him to death, still loves more and more. There was but one such lover, and He was our Lord Jesus Christ ; He knew that His hour had come, (John xiii.—1.) He knew that He had to undergo the torments of His passion and the shame of His death, as foretold by the prophets; (Ps. xxi.—17) still He loved us unto the end. (John xiii.—1.)

But, brethren, if to die for some one is the greatest act of love, it can be done but once by a man ; and Jesus Christ—a God and a man at the same time—knowing that as a man He could die for us only once, by a marvellous act of His mercy and power, wanted to die for us every day, as a God, and therefore instituted the august sacrament of love, in which He dies mystically on

our altars throughout the world, thus renewing the bloody sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner.

After giving all these proofs of His infinite love, Jesus seems to complain by the mouth of His prophet: "Scourges," He says, "were gathered upon Me, and I knew not why." (Ps. xxxiv.—15.) What does the Saviour mean? He meant that His sufferings and death will be useless for many, and He knew not why. He knew that many would remain deaf to His divine voice, and He knew not why. He knew that many would refuse to be refreshed and comforted, (Matt. ii.—18) and He knew not why. Indeed, scourges, that is to say, the indifference and forgetfulness of men, are a burden to Christ, and He knows not their cause. But, my Jesus, all men do not forget Thee. True Christians remember Thy sufferings, Thy death and Thy love. Relying on the graces of Thy sacraments and on the efficacy of prayers, for Thy sake they make all the sacrifices which their wills demand in order to remain Thy loving and virtuous followers.

May these faithful children who call on Thy name, O Jesus, who understand Thy love and love Thee in return, make up for the forgetfulness and indifference of men! May the history of Thy love be the history of their gratitude! Amen.

SERMON XLVII.

THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

This Child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many in Israel. (Luke ii.—34.)

We read in the law given to Moses by the Lord: "Every first-born of men thou shalt redeem with price. And when thy son shall ask to-morrow: What is this? Thou shalt answer him: With a strong hand did the Lord bring us forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. For when Pharao was hardened, and would not let us go, the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of man to the first-born of beasts: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the womb of the male sex, and the first-born of my sons I redeem." (Exodus xiii.—13 & 15.) Christ, Who came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, (Matt. v.—17) desired to be presented in the Temple of Jerusalem in order to be redeemed according to the requirements of

the Mosaic Law. His parents took Him up to the temple.

Now, will God reveal the divinity of His Son at Jerusalem as He did at Bethlehem by wonderful signs? No, brethren; but there was in the holy city a man named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in him. He had received from God the assurance that his ashes would not be gathered to his fathers before he saw the Christ of the Lord. (Luke ii.—25.) Picture to yourselves this old man, bending under the weight of years, coming into the temple, and behold the ecstatic joy which overflows his old heart, and depicted on his countenance, when he beheld the Child Jesus in the arms of Mary. With humble reverence he takes the Child in his arms and launches forth into that beautiful canticle so replete with mysterious import: "Now, Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all the people. A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." (Luke ii.—28 & 32.) And in giving back the Child to His mother he uttered this remarkable prophecy: "Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel." (Luke ii.—34.) At the same hour a prophetess Anna, who departed not from the

temple, and who by prayers and fastings was serving night and day, coming in, confessed also to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. (Luke ii.—37 & 38.)

Of course, brethren, Our Lord was not bound to submit Himself to the law of presentation, which meant for the Jews, gratitude to God for favors received and satisfaction for sins, because it was He Who in union with His Father brought the Jewish nation out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and consequently had no thanks to render to any one and no sin to redeem with price. But He wanted to teach us to observe, without reservation, all the laws of God and never to shirk our duty. When He was presented in the Temple, He offered Himself up as a propitiation for our sins, (I. John ii.—2) and in doing so increased His merits as man for the benefit of mankind.

Now, what did Simeon mean when he let fall these dread words: "He is set for the fall as well as for the resurrection of many in Israel"? Has the Son of God come to destroy souls or to save them? (Luke ix.—56.) It seems, after this prophecy, that some will reject the proffered mercy of God, by rejecting the Redeemer. It was so, brethren, for we know that the Jewish nation, the chosen ones of God, crucified Him after rejecting Him with fury: "Away with Him! Away with

Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children." (Matt. xxvii.—25.) Thus, brethren, the coming of Christ, which should have been the occasion of salvation for the Jews, has been the occasion of their fall from the true faith. Simeon's prophecy was too true.

Why did they reject Christ, set for their resurrection? Because they were of the earth—earthly; because their hearts were wedded to temporal riches and transitory glory. They were expecting a king who would establish a kingdom, grand and powerful; who would throw off the cursed Roman yoke and subjugate all nations to His sway. But in Christ they found a King born in a stable, living in poverty, not having whereon to lay His head; they saw His contempt for the things of the world, His inculcation of poverty, chastity and self-denial; consequently their hearts were hardened against Him, and His rejection became a matter of course. Yes, the Jews were deceived in their expectations, and the Cross became a scandal unto them.

But, brethren, if the Christ crucified has been a stumbling-block unto the Jews, will He be foolishness unto us, the Gentiles? (I. Cor. i.—23.) If He has been set for the fall of many in Israel, will He be set for our fall also? Well, brethren, we have the same fallen nature as the Jews, and this awful fate will be reserved for us if we follow

in their footsteps ; that is to say, if we seek only an earthly king, earthly pleasures and depend only upon our natural strength to reach God. But if we seek Christ, heavenly things and depend upon His grace for salvation, then Christ will be set for our resurrection ; for then we will be able to do all things in Him Who strengthens us. (Philip iv.—13.) Inclined to fall on account of our natural weakness, we will obtain all the supernatural strength of which we stand in need from Him Who is the resurrection and the life, (John xi.—25) and Who has been set also for the resurrection of many in Israel. Amen.

SERMON XLVIII.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

After the days of her purification were accomplished, the Blessed Virgin went to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice. (Luke ii.—22-24.)

The birth of every man, who is made to the image and likeness of God, (Gen. i.—26) should add new rays and ornaments to the divine splendors, since it reproduces indefinitely in every human being the picture of God ; besides giving Him at the same time, new worshipers, with all the homage of their intelligence and the offerings of their hearts. Yes, the birth of a child should be a joyful event in every way ; but no, it is not in every respect a joyful event. Humanity, deprived of original justice after the fall of the first man, was wounded morally and physically, so that man, entering upon life in that fallen state, seems to be a shadow of his former self, and his birth is the beginning of an existence which is to be marked with more sorrows than joys. The very sources of life were poisoned, and God wanted His people

always to bear this truth in mind by enacting a law declaring : " That every woman giving birth to a child was unclean during forty days for a son, and eighty days for a daughter, and obliged to offer a sacrifice, as it is written in the law of God." (Lev. xii.)

We understand then, brethren, that God imposed these ceremonies of the purification upon the women of Israel in order to keep alive in the memory of man the guilt of the original transgression. The law speaks of woman bringing forth children in the ordinary condition; consequently this law did not apply to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who brought forth the Holy One, Whose body was formed by the operation of the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary condition, because she remained a virgin in conceiving the Son of God and she remained a virgin after His birth. Far from being stained in the accomplishment of this mystery, the Blessed Virgin increased in purity—it was the very reason of her Immaculate Conception. Besides, is not her Son the second person of the Blessed Trinity, in eternity, and her own in time? Is He not the Author and Master of the law? Could He not exempt His mother from its observance? Assuredly, brethren ; but the spirit of God which directed our Immaculate Mother, inspired her not to avail herself of this exemption, but to give us an example of humility and obedience.

Moreover, she knew that the mystery accomplished in her was unknown to all, except Joseph, her chaste spouse ; so in order to prevent the breath of scandal from diminishing the reverence due to the law of Moses, she did what the law prescribed. The zeal and charity of her Divine Son for the salvation of souls made her hasten to humble herself. As Jesus Christ is the Father of regenerated humanity, so Mary is truly the mother, and gave to her spiritual children not only the example of all virtues, but a help and an encouragement in practising them.

After St. Bernard, I repeat : " It is evident that the mother of God was by no means included in the law of purification, because she conceived her Son without knowing man, as the Prophet Jeremias foretold : 'The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth, a woman shall compass a man.'" (Jer. xxxi.—22.) Without knowing man, contrary to the laws of nature, pure and undefiled, she will surround the Saviour with her body, and when she shall bring forth, her virginity shall not be defiled.

The Church has celebrated this feast of Our Lady for many centuries. According to the learned Dom. Gueranger, (Le temps de Noel t. 2, p. 587) although it is difficult to trace its institution, this feast dates back to the pontificate of Pope Gelasius in 494. According to Hugues,

Menard, Rocca and Benedict XIV., the pagan feast of the Ambavalia, which consisted in solemn processions at which the Romans carried lighted torches, in order to express their joy for their victories over the nations subjugated to their sway, gave the idea to the Roman Pontiffs of substituting in its place a Christian festival. The procession on that day represents well indeed the journey undertaken by Mary and Joseph with Jesus, from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, as it is also a symbol of our life on earth, a pilgrimage by the light of Him Who is the Light of nations. (Luke ii.—32.) The lighted candle is a very expressive figure of our Saviour, and answers well to the idea given us by holy Simeon.

St. Ives, of Chartres, in a sermon on this feast, beautifully elucidates the ceremonies connected with it. Antiquity always looked upon the bees as types of virginity, for the queen of each hive is set apart for reproduction. The wax which they produce is made from the sweetest and purest substance of the most fragrant flowers, and represents the flesh of the Divine Child formed by the Holy Ghost of the pure substance of the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Anselm, in his "Enarrations on St. Luke," presents us with three considerations on the lighted candle. The wax, which is the work and produce of the virgin bee, is the flesh which Jesus took from the Virgin Mary ; the

wick, which is in the interior, is the soul of Our Lord, and the light which it sends forth represents the divinity of Christ, the Word incarnate, Who enlightens every man that comes into this world. (John i.—9.)

Therefore, brethren, keep always the pious custom of having candles, blessed on Candlemas Day, or the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, in your homes. They are a sacramental of the Church, instituted to excite in us pious dispositions, by means of which we may obtain grace and banish the spirit of darkness which endeavors to put out the light of faith in the soul. Follow then, brethren, the pious custom of placing a lighted candle in the hand of the dying, not only as a help in the last struggle against our enemy, the devil, but as a symbol of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, from Whom we expect life everlasting, with the help of His holy grace and the assistance of His Immaculate Mother. Amen.

SERMON XLIX.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Arise, and fly into Egypt. (Matt. ii.—13.)

After the Magi had departed from Bethlehem and returned to their Eastern homes, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep, saying: "Arise, take the Child and His mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him. Who arose, took the Child and His mother by night, and retired into Egypt." (Matt. ii.—13 & 14.) Assuredly, brethren, God had many other means of escaping from Herod's cruelty than to go into a foreign and distant land to find shelter and safety, for He is the Master of all events. But Christ, Who suffered for us, wished to leave us an example that we should follow His steps. (I. Peter ii.—21.) He wanted to present the whole course of His mortal life as an object-lesson to men. If the Son of God had to suffer persecution from the tyranny of Herod, our souls have also to suffer from a cruel enemy, the devil, who as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour. (I. Peter v.—8.)

The flight into Egypt is an invitation to us to fly from a wicked and deceitful world and from the occasions of sin.

We must flee from the world. I do not mean to say, brethren, that we must cut off all those social relations, either useful or agreeable, which are imposed upon us by our different callings in life. Such an idea is far from my mind. But the world which we must flee from is the world cursed by Christ, because of its scandals, (Matt. xviii.—7) of its snares, of its false maxims. For the false maxims of the world, based upon a blind love for the present and a complete forgetfulness of the future, sow the seed of pride, sensual pleasures and selfishness in human hearts, and leave them sterile for life everlasting.

Yes, the world is the slave of pride. The wealthy ones are the sole objects of esteem and consideration, praise and admiration for worldly souls. Carried away by the streams of their ambition or the illusions of their vanity, they earnestly desire to become one of those whom they admire. They sacrifice their duty in order to reach their aim, and although they think they are free, they are the slaves of the world, the slaves of pride.

Is not the world also the slave of pleasures? Indeed it is, brethren. You have only to cast a glance around you, and you will see the slaves of pleasure staggering under its burden, after drink-

ing of its enchanted cup. Sinful indulgences have been taken at first for social formalities, and in a very short time the moral principles of divine faith have been completely uprooted ; man, robbed of his health, life, and very often of his immortal soul, has become the slave of pleasure. Who can determine the number of men, women and children led to ruin and perdition by the false maxims of the world.

The world is also the slave of selfishness. The world is opposed to Christ, because Christ is all charity, and charity is opposed to selfishness. "He that abideth in charity, abideth in God and God in him." (I. St. John iv.—16.) How can the world, busy with the pursuit of pleasures and gratifications, have any other love than a love for itself? Its rich members may sometimes remember the suffering ones of Christ and make a short call at Church, but charity does not consist in almsgiving and short visits to the Church only. Charity is something more. "Charity is patient, is kind, envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up ; charity is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth." (I. Cor. xiii.—4.) The world is impatient for pleasure, unkind to piety and devotion ; the world is envious, perverted, filled with pride. The world is ambitious, seeks its own, does evil, and rejoices in sin. Yes, the

world is opposed to charity. God is charity, therefore the world is opposed to God. Selfishness, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life, constitute the world. (I. St. John ii.—16.) Dear brethren, no wonder then if St. John exclaims: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in it. For if any man loves the world, the charity of the Father is not in him," (I. St. John ii.—15) and without charity there is no salvation.

We must flee from the occasions of sin. Christ fleeing from the wicked Herod taught us to flee from the occasions of sin. Remember that all persons and places which may lead us into sin are to be avoided under the penalty of mortal sin. The best means to conquer the devil is to fly from him. A French admiral, a devout Catholic, once remarked: "I would rather encounter five warships with a single vessel than fight a temptation in the occasion of sin." He was right, brethren; it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to overcome a temptation when placed in the occasion of sin. Then, what we must do and what every one can do, is to avoid the danger of falling into sin. Fly from it, and your victory is certain. The Holy Ghost tells us: "He that loveth danger shall perish in it." (Eccl. iii.—27.)

Let us, therefore, brethren, imitate the ardor of Joseph and Mary, and never remain in danger. It is hard sometimes to flee from danger, but

remember that it was hard also for the virgin mother and her blessed Spouse to undertake a long journey, through unknown lands, in their flight into Egypt; but they did not hesitate, for the life of the Child Jesus was at stake; do not hesitate, brethren, you who are in the occasion of sin—do not hesitate to fly from danger, for the immortal salvation of your soul is at stake. Place under your feet the world and its pride, its pleasures, its selfishness and its enticing invitations to sin. Seek life and salvation from Christ by keeping the word of God, and His charity will be perfected in you, (I. St. John ii.—5), and if you be in sin it will cover a multitude of them. (I. Peter iv. —8.) Amen.

SERMON L.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. (Matt. ii.—18.)

When the wise men, led by a miraculous star, came to Jerusalem, they inquired: "'Where is He that is born King of the Jews?' Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ was to be born? When they said to him: 'In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophet,' Herod called privately the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them, and sending them into Bethlehem, said: 'Go and diligently inquire after the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him.' The wise men having found the Child with Mary His mother, offered Him gifts, but received an answer in sleep that they should not

return to Herod, because he sought to destroy the Child, and they went back another way into their country." (Matt. ii.—2 & foll.)

Fearing to lose the throne which he had usurped, Herod was troubled at the wise men's question: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" But why, brethren, should he give way to fear and terror?—for he knows, and all Jerusalem with him, that the Messiah is to come; he knows that the prophets foretold the advent of the Expectation of Israel and the Desired of nations; he knows that His kingdom will not be of this world; (John xviii.—36) he knows that Christ comes to rule over souls and not over bodies. But no; Herod knows not; he had not the faith; this divine virtue was extinguished in his heart, as in the hearts of the ungrateful Jews. Herod saw in the coming Christ an earthly rival. His jealously, aroused by his ambition and pride, led him to commit one of the most atrocious crimes ever recorded in the pages of history. "Perceiving that he was deceived by the wise men, Herod was exceeding angry; and sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." (Matt. ii.—16.) He thought in his folly that the divine Child would be involved in the slaughter, but he was disappointed; his hopes were dashed to the

ground ; for an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying : " Arise and take the Child and His mother and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." (Matt. ii.—13.)

Indeed, brethren, the designs of Herod were foolish, for there is no wisdom, no prudence, no counsel against the Lord. (Prov. xxi.—30.) And if we look as we should upon the slaughter of the Holy Innocents, with the eyes of faith, we will see that this crime reacted upon the guilty one alone, for not only did he kill his wife and two children and all his best friends, but his life was tormented by bloody visions, his body became a mass of loathsome corruption, and at last in despair he committed suicide. This was the just but terrible chastisement for this royal murderer of children, while his innocent victims exchanged temporal happiness for everlasting felicity. The Church has always honored them as martyrs baptized in their blood, and on the 28th of December, invokes their powerful patronage before the throne of God's infinite mercy and bounty. Their martyrdom was an act of justification in the eyes of God, as Baptism received in the Faith is also an act of justification. Let us salute them then, in the beautiful language of the Church : " Hail, flowers of martyrs, because at the threshold of life, the

persecutor of Christ has cut you off as a whirlwind carries away the budding roses. Your radiant and pure souls descended into Limbo to carry to the Patriarchs, to the Prophets, to the just of the Old Law, the tidings of a great joy—the birth of a Redeemer. First victims of Christ's young flock sacrificed on account of Him, you possess everlasting life in heaven."

Dear brethren, there is a lesson taught us in the Biblical narrative. The awful crime of Herod is still perpetrated in our Christian times. Holy innocents are murdered by inhuman Herods, and, alas! almost daily. I hear you say: "Tell us who are they that are like Herod nowadays?" I will tell you, brethren. Those who take the lives of their unborn children, who waste or destroy the principle of life, who sell or prescribe drugs for the same criminal purposes, who perform or advise operations, directly or indirectly to prevent childbirth—all such are guilty of the heinous crime of Herod. Poor little ones, they were destined by God from all eternity to live, to be baptized, to share in the good works done by humanity, and through man's liberty of sinning they have been deprived forever of the sight of God.

Those who scandalize the little ones of Christ commit Herod's crime. Our Lord tells us in express terms: "He that shall scandalize one of the little ones that believe in Me, it were better for

him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matt. xviii.—6.) Parents, in relation to your children, masters, toward your servants, superiors, toward your inferiors, see how you hang this mill-stone of scandalizing the innocent about your neck.

Finally, those who neglect or prevent the little ones from going to Christ, (Matt. xix.—14) that is to say, neglect or refuse to instruct them or have them instructed by the proper teachers in the way of salvation, commit Herod's crime.

Indeed, at the thought of so many children ruined physically and morally, I cannot help repeating the prophecy of Jeremias, foretelling the slaughter of the Holy Innocents: "A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (Matt. ii.—18.) I ask you in the name of Christ, brethren, not to lose sight of the duties and responsibilities imposed upon you by your calling. Love your children; love their souls above all; bring them up in the fear and love of God; watch over them; guide them in all things to justification; and always have before your eyes the terrible chastisement of Herod, who was guilty of murdering the innocent ones to satisfy his own perverse inclinations, so that you may never shrink from duty. Amen.

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